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US, Iran reject ceasefire plan; surrender or else, says Trump

'Can Take Out Iran In One Night... Maybe Tomorrow'

Chidanand Rajghatta

Washington: US President Donald Trump on Monday warned Iran that he is ready to go beyond destroying its power plants and bridges if it does not "cry uncle" before his Tuesday evening deadline.

FULL COVERAGE: P 3, 6 & 16

"We have obliterated the country...they don't want to say uncle (capitulate)... they should. Otherwise they will not have much left," Trump told reporters as he strolled on the White House grounds mingling with children for the Easter egg hunt the First Lady was hosting.

The remarks came soon after the US and Iran rejected a 45-hour ceasefire plan put together by Pakistan, Egypt and Turkiye as part of mediation efforts. While Trump called it a "very significant step" but "not good enough" for him to sign, Tehran said it wanted a "permanent end" to the war.

In his presser, Trump maintained that his administration was talking to a third-tier Iranian leadership (having eliminated the first two) whom he found much more reasonable. "We could leave right now and it would take them 15 years to rebuild what they have, but I want to finish it up," Trump said, amid growing disquiet across America, including in MAGA circles, that he is driving the US into a quagmire in West Asia and maybe crossing a war crimes red line.

At a White House briefing later, the US president warned, "the entire country (Iran) could be taken out in one night ...and that night may be tomorrow night."

▶Iran seeks guarantees, P 16

IRAN'S LARGEST PETROCHEM UNIT HIT

Photo: AP

- **US-Israeli attacks in Iran kill more than 25 people.** Iran responds with missile fire on Israel and Gulf nations
- **Sharif Univ of Technology (pic) hit on Monday.** Multiple countries have sanctioned the university, particularly for its **work on Iran's ballistic missile programme**
- Israel **claims 'powerful strike' on Iran's largest petrochemical complex in South Pars,** the world's largest known gas reserve
- **Four of family die trapped in rubble** of a residential building in **Haifa** in northern Israel after Iran missile strike
- **21 ships transit Hormuz over weekend – highest levels of traffic** since the war. Before war, it was 135 vessels a day

Head of Iran Guards' intel wing killed

The head of the intelligence organisation of Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was killed Monday in a US-Israeli "terrorist attack", Iranian media said, citing a statement by the Guards. Majid Khademi, who becomes the latest key figure killed in the ongoing war, took over in 2025 after Israeli airstrikes killed his predecessor.

Israel's military also said it had killed Asghar Bagheri, commander of the Guards' Quds Force special operations unit, Sunday. "We will reach anyone who seeks to harm us," Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu said.

The Guards' Intelligence Organisation vowed a "major retaliatory strike" against those responsible for killing their commanders, their official Sepah news website reported. AGENCIES

Nine Tamil Nadu cops get death for 2020 dad-son custodial killings

K.Kaushik@timesofindia.com

Madurai: A sessions court in Tamil Nadu's Madurai sentenced to death 9 police personnel – three of them officers – on Monday for the 2020 custodial deaths of P Jeyaraj and his son J Beniks at Sathankulam station in Tuticorin, terming the victims' torture at the hands of the cops an "act of vengeance" deserving of the strictest possible punishment.

"Mere life sentences would not be sufficient...The policemen would have no fear and would, instead, get emboldened," first additional district and sessions court judge G Muthukumaran said in his order, categorising the case as rarest of rare. "It (lesser punishment) would send a false message to society. It should be a stringent one to prevent a recurrence of such incidents."

Jeyaraj and Beniks were taken to the station on June 19, 2020, for keeping their shop open beyond the pandemic lockdown deadline.

▶Social evil, P 6

K'taka HC to road-rage accused: B'luru traffic will teach you patience

Bins Techie's Plea To Quash Murder Attempt Charge

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Karnataka high court on Monday declined to quash an attempt-to-murder charge against a city-based software engineer in a road rage case, underscoring that such offences will not be taken lightly.

Noting that nothing can be done if one lacks patience, Justice M Nagaprasanna stressed the need for restraint on the roads. "Bengaluru traffic will teach you patience. No road rage will be pardoned," he observed.

Seeking interim relief from the court, the petitioner's counsel had earlier argued there was no intent to commit a serious offence. He further contended that the attempt-to-murder charge had been invoked without supporting material.

The case A couple and their child were riding on a scooter when **a car driven by the techie allegedly rammed into them, knocking the trio off the two-wheeler** near M S Ramaiah Hosp signal on Oct 26, 2025. The collision was suspected to have been triggered by road rage

Charge added later Police had initially filed a case of rash driving. Later, **when the case was shifted from the traffic police to Sadashivanagar police station,** Section 109 (1) of BNS was pressed, which pertains to attempt to murder

The judge, however, indicated that the court was not inclined to intervene as investigation was still ongoing. He observed that road rage itself could act as a trigger for serious offences and said the petitioner could approach the court after the filing of the chargesheet.

Following the court's observations, the petitioner chose to withdraw the plea.

Campbell Wilson, AI CEO, quits amid mounting losses

Air India CEO **Campbell Wilson** has resigned amid mounting losses and a slower-than-expected turnaround of the airline the Tata Group took back in its fold over four years ago, **reports Saurabh Sinha.** Wilson, whose resignation was accepted by the airline board last week, will stay till a successor is found and is serving his notice period. That is likely to happen once the final report into last June's AI 171 Ahmedabad crash is out. Wilson had joined AI in July 2022 for a 5-year term. Tata Group started looking for his successor a few months ago. **P 11**

Common I PU exam likely from next year

SruthySusan.Ullas
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The department of pre-university education is planning to conduct a common, state-level examination for first-year PU students, starting next academic year. There'll be college-level evaluation of answer scripts.

Currently, I PU exams — preparation of question papers and evaluation — are conducted at college level, leading to differences in standards among colleges. For instance, a district with impressive performance in I PU may not always throw up an equally good pass percentage in II PU public exams.

In a bid to standardise assessment across colleges, the common exam exercise has been taken up to achieve parity across govt, aided and unaided colleges.

▶Question banks, P 2

Claims of 27L Bengal voters in doubtful list rejected, can't vote

Dhananjay Mahapatra & Bharti Jain | TNN

New Delhi: Nearly 27 lakh of the 60 lakh whose claims for inclusion in West Bengal's electoral roll were put in the "doubtful" category during the special intensive revision exercise may not be able to vote in the upcoming assembly polls, with judicial officers overseeing adjudication rejecting their claims.

▶LS, RS reject oppn notice for motion to remove CEC, P8

The electoral roll for the Bengal assembly polls' first phase — scheduled for April 23 — was to be frozen by Monday midnight. The SC, which was informed of the final deletions by the Calcutta HC, on Monday rejected pleas of Bengal govt and TMC supporters for inclusion of names of people whose appeals against deletion by judicial officers are pending with the 19 special appellate tribunals.

"We allowed inclusion of names of those cleared by the judicial officers by providing for supplementary lists beyond the publication of the final voter list (on Feb 28). This cannot be stretched to the outcome of appeals before the appellate tribunals against rejections," the court said.

▶Deletions at 88L, P 11

SC asks CS, DGP to apologise to CJ

SC slammed chief secretary Dushyant Nariala and DGP Siddh Nath Gupta for not responding to SOS calls from the Calcutta HC CJ as judicial officers were held hostage in Malda and asked them to apologise. "Please lower yourself a bit so that ordinary minions like the HC CJ can access the chief secretary," SC said. **P 11**

SC: Probe '₹1,200cr contracts to kin of Arunachal CM'

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Observing nepotism and patronage has no place in distribution of public resources, the SC Monday directed a CBI inquiry into the allegation of allotment of public contracts worth over Rs 1,200 crore by the Arunachal Pradesh govt to companies owned or controlled by CM Pema Khandu's close family members. The court took note of CAG reports that flagged gaps in the decision-making process in awarding tenders in 10 years.

▶Contd on P 6

Judiciary graft chapter: 3 academicians move SC against NCERT assn ban

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Three academicians engaged by NCERT as experts — Prof Michel Danino, Suparna Diwakar and Alok Prasanna Kumar — whom Supreme Court banned for life "for projecting a negative image of judiciary" by mentioning about corruption in judiciary in a Class 8 textbook, approached the apex court Monday seeking a review of the order.

"Class 6 and Class 7 textbooks do deal with issues... faced by legislature, Election Commission and the executive... We want to show the processes that have been followed... These are academics with a lot of credibility," the petitioners' counsel said.

IN THE COURTS

- A **CM's public assurance to citizens would not be enforceable unless** backed by a policy decision, says Delhi HC
- In jail for 12 years for allegedly killing his superior for not granting leave, **SC declares a former IRB constable innocent for lack of evidence, and directs his release**
- Chhattisgarh HC sentences **Amit Jogi, son of the state's first CM Ajit Jogi, to life imprisonment** for involvement in the 2003 murder of NCP politician Ram Jaggi **P 5**

▶Grave implications, P 5

Mom forces cops to reopen dead son's case

After gathering evidence for 18 months, a single mother in Dehradun has forced the police to reopen her son's hit-and-run death case that was wound up with a closure report. **P 5**

K'taka pet parent's dog dies in locked car

A pet parent from Karnataka was detained by Panaji police after his golden retriever suffocated to death in a locked car while he played at a casino. The man allegedly left the canine in the car without leaving any window open for ventilation. **P 8**

Bangalore Times

INSIDE BANABAALI:

#ViRosh's 19th-century Rayalaseema odyssey

UK PM Starmer flags antisemitic concerns over Ye's UK return

Niranjan Kumar injured after bar scuffle in B'luru; FIR filed

Buzzstop

RAHUL ARUMOORY RAMBLER'S DEATH SHAKES INDUSTRY SHUTDOWN IN BENGAL

Permits, not backlash, behind Karan Aujla's show cancellations

"It is important to get permissions like liquor licenses for large-scale events"

More beds than patients at ESI hospital; ₹65cr down the drain

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Despite being situated in Karnataka's capital — home to one of the state's largest concentrations of govt employees — Employees' State Insurance (ESI) hospital in Indiranagar continues to report low bed occupancy, sparking concerns about underutilisation of resources and gaps in access to care.

In 2023-24, the hospital's bed occupancy stood at just 32.6%, up slightly from 25.8% in 2022-23 and 21.3% in 2021-22. The numbers were even lower during Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21, when occupancy dropped to 8.3%.

Even before the pandemic, the hospital failed to cross optimal levels, recording 34.5% in 2019-20 and 35% in 2018-19 — far below the 70% benchmark required for additional central grants.

This trend is particularly striking given Bengaluru's large insured workforce, which should ideally translate into higher utilisation of ESI facilities. The issue, however, is not limited to the capital.

Across Karnataka, ESI hospitals have struggled to meet the 70% bed occupancy threshold, resulting in the state losing over Rs 65 crore in potential grants from Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) between 2019-20 and 2023-24, according to Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) report for 2024. The report notes that if the occupancy rate in an ESI hospital is more than 70%, then state govt is eligible to get an additional grant of Rs 200 per insured person in the state from ESIC.

Chethan Shivakumar

Lack of ICUs, specialists

The audit attributes the poor occupancy largely to systemic gaps — including inadequate infrastructure, shortage of equipment, lack of ICU facilities and absence of specialist doctors.

The absence of ICUs has had a particularly significant impact. As per Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) guidelines, district-level hospitals are required to have between four and 12 ICU beds to cater to 5% to 10% of patients. However, none of the test-checked ESI hospitals in the state had functional ICU facilities.

This has restricted clinical services. Following a Supreme Court ruling that bars hospitals without ICUs from performing major surgeries, even qualified surgeons in ESI hospitals have been unable to carry out such procedures — limiting the scope of care and likely contributing to lower patient footfall.

Injudicious referrals strain finances

The CAG report highlights that referrals to tie-up hospitals have placed a significant financial burden on the ESI system, accounting for 21% to 31% of total expenditure in recent years. Referral costs rose from Rs 105.8 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 140.1 crore in 2023-24.

This trend has been attributed to inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of specialist doctors in ESI hospitals. In Davanagere, over 2,200 cataract patients were referred despite the presence of an ophthalmologist, while in Mangaluru, outdated ENT equipment led to 1,765 referrals. The audit also flagged lapses in the provision of medicines after discharge.

Govt cites operational constraints

Responding to the audit findings, Karnataka govt attributed the absence of ICU facilities to infrastructural, financial and operational constraints. It also cited delays by ESIC in upgrading hospitals, along with challenges in augmenting existing facilities. However, govt maintained that emergency and critical care services hadn't been compromised.

The report also flagged poor utilisation of investments in medical and digital infrastructure. Projects worth several crores remain underused or non-functional, including Rs 5.3 crore spent on telemedicine services, Rs 7.7 crore worth of uninstalled medical equipment, and liquid oxygen plants set up during the Covid-19 pandemic that are currently non-operational.

They offer free, subsidised care

ESI hospitals are govt-run healthcare facilities that provide free or subsidised medical care to workers covered under Employees' State Insurance Scheme and their dependants.

Mysuru has highest occupancy

Among the hospitals, Mysuru recorded the highest occupancy, followed by Hubballi. In contrast, facilities in Dandeli, Mangaluru and Belagavi reported alarmingly low utilisation, with occupancy rates falling to single digits during the period under review.

As 6-yr deadline looms, land issues stall suburban rail

State & Centre Pass Buck Over Patchy Progress

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP), a 148km network approved in 2020 with a six-year deadline, is yet to gather pace, with Union and state govts engaged in constant bickering over the slow transfer of private and govt lands.

The project is being executed by Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Ltd, or K-Ride, a joint venture between the Centre and state. It has seen patchy progress across corridors. Work on two key stretches — Byappanahalli-Rajanukunte and Heelalige-Rajanukunte — has been particularly affected.

In 2025, Larsen & Toubro (L&T) terminated its contract for parts of the project, citing non-availability of land as per agreed conditions. K-Ride has since issued fresh tenders for pending work on the Byappanahalli–Chikkabanavara section.

Responding to Chikkaballapur MP K Sudhakar's question, railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in the Lok Sabha that land acquisition for the 25km Byappanahalli-Chikkabanavara corridor has been completed. Separate contracts for station buildings have been awarded and construction is under way. Tenders for other components have been floated.

Progress on the 46.2km Heelalige-Rajanukunte corridor remains limited. Of the 57 acres required, only 7.8 acres have been acquired so far. The minister noted that delays stem from the non-acquisition of private land and the pending transfer of state govt land. No revised completion timeline was provided in the reply.

On the remaining corridors — KSR Bengaluru City-Devanahalli (41.4km) and Kengeri-Whitefield (35.5km) — alignments have been approved and land acquisition has begun. Work on the airport line to Devanahalli, initially prioritised for connectivity to Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), has also been slow.

With two corridors stalled and the other two yet to begin construction, timely land acquisition remains central to reviving the project.

K-Ride, in which state govt holds a 51% stake, had earlier been caught in Centre-state disagreements over implementation issues, including the appointment of a full-time managing director. In Dec 2025, both sides appointed IRSE officer Lakshman Singh to the post.

K-Ride encashes ₹57cr bank guarantee

With the arbitration tribunal rejecting L&T's request to restrain the invocation of performance guarantees, K-Ride invoked and encashed a Rs 57-crore bank guarantee issued by YES Bank on behalf of L&T for Corridor 2 (Byappanahalli-Chikkabanavara) and Corridor 4 (Heelalige-Rajanukunte).

"L&T terminated two agreements and obtained a stay from a commercial court against the encashment of bank guarantees. They invoked the arbitration clause, following which a tribunal was constituted to examine their claims and our counterclaims. The commercial court referred all matters to the arbitration tribunal," a press release read.

File photo

ON SLOW TRACK: While two BSRP corridors are stalled, work on two others is yet to begin. Timely land acquisition remains central to reviving the project

One more rail coach restaurant in B'luru

Soon, KSR Bengaluru railway station will get a second eatery themed on the lines of a train compartment. This will be the third rail coach restaurant in Bengaluru. Currently, two such restaurants are functional in KSR Bengaluru and SMVT Bengaluru stations, respectively, and both are licensed out to private operators.

"A third rail coach restaurant is under commission to enhance passenger experience. Work is going on and is expected to be completed in 45 days. It will be located at the third entry of the station," South Western Railway's Bengaluru divisional railway manager, Ashutosh Kumar Singh, said.

FOOD ON WHEELS: At present, two such restaurants are functional in the city

The project is an attempt to increase SWR's non-fare revenue potential through catering. In financial year 2025-26, SWR's Bengaluru division earned a record total of nearly Rs 17.4 crore in catering service revenue, surpassing the previous best of Rs 16.5 crore.

Additionally, SWR also plans to bring global fast-food brands to station platforms, promising airport-standard food for passengers on the move. Once civil construction is complete, the allotment of the shops — premium-brand catering outlets — will be conducted via an e-auction for a period of five years, similar to the existing catering stalls.

— Anush S

Slow search for faster Mumbai route

Seven months after railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced a superfast Mumbai-Bengaluru train service, the Railway Board is still searching for a faster route. A Dec 9 notification approved a train between SMVT Bengaluru and Lokmanya Tilak Terminus. Its 24-hour running time was slower than the existing Udyan Express. The train has since been put on hold. Bengaluru divisional railway manager Ashutosh Kumar Singh confirmed writing to the ministry again and seeking approval. TNN

South to east: BDA layouts map city's shifting growth

Vindhya.Pabolu @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The evolution of the city's urban sprawl can be traced not only through skylines, but also through layouts on paper. Data from Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) shows how the city's growth has steadily moved across regions over the past five decades, following land, jobs and infrastructure changes.

Between 1972 and 2025, BDA approved 1,017 layouts across the city. In the early decades, development was firmly rooted in south Bengaluru, which still accounts for 40-43% of all approved layouts.

Neighbourhoods such as Uttarahalli, Begur and Kengeri became the first major hubs of planned expansion, together accounting for hundreds of layouts. Large parcels of land, coupled with proximity to the city's older core, made the southern belt a natural starting point for organised growth.

But by the 1980s and 1990s, the city's expansion had begun to shift. North Bengaluru, particularly Yeshwantpur and Yelahanka, saw a rise in layout approvals, driven largely by cooperative housing societies. This marked a phase where organised residential planning began to spread beyond the southern base.

The next major shift came after 2000, when the city's growth tilted eastwards. With the rise of the IT corridor, areas in east Bengaluru and Anekal taluk began witnessing increased layout activity. What had once been peripheral zones with limited presence in BDA records emerged as key sites of new development, reflecting the pull of employment hubs and improved connectivity.

A senior BDA official said the pattern of approvals closely mirrors demand and infrastructure. "Applications are placed before the town planning committee. After the committee's approval, a plan is issued. We go through all the documents to ensure that the plan approvals are in line with the rules and regulations," the official said, adding that applications are now coming in from across the city.

Despite these geographic shifts, one constant stands out: the dominance of residential growth. Nearly 90% of all approved layouts — about 900 — are residential, while industrial and commercial layouts together account for fewer than 20. Officials attribute this to the large land requirements of industrial projects, which limit their spread within city limits.

Denser developments

More recently, pressure on land has begun to reflect in vertical expansion. In 2025-26 alone, BDA received 179 plan approval requests for single and multiple plots, indicating a gradual move towards denser development even as new layouts continue to emerge.

The data also points to a dynamic planning process. At least one in 10 layouts has undergone revisions after initial approval, often to accommodate changes in design or infrastructure as demand rises. Taken together, the numbers sketch a clear trajectory: from south-led expansion to northward spread, and then an eastward push shaped by the IT economy. In doing so, BDA's layout approvals offer a blueprint of how Bengaluru has grown — and continues to reshape itself.

LAYOUT APPROVAL & DISTRIBUTION

413	268	177	132	27
South Bengaluru	North Bengaluru	East Bengaluru	Anekal	Others

→ Source: BDA | From 1972 to 2025

144 ticket touts held in B'luru rail division

Anush.S@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: With the demand for train tickets increasing, especially during festive seasons and other peak demand periods, Railway Protection Force (RPF) is dealing with a significant challenge of touts, who book live tickets without proper authorisation and sell them to passengers for a commission.

In 2025-26, as many as 144 such touts were arrested in South Western Railway's (SWR) Bengaluru division alone. RPF officials said the presence of touts usually increases during peak demand periods and in Tatkal quota.

The touts arrested in 2025-26 were caught with 277 live tickets, most in bulk, which RPF estimated to be worth just over Rs 4 lakh. "These touts are mostly those who pretend to be agents without getting licence from IRCTC. They create their own passwords with their phone numbers by buying 2-3 sim cards. Then they create multiple user IDs without licence," said a senior RPF officer.

Touts usually book tickets online in bulk when they are opened for sale 60 days before journey date. However, with the online push by IRCTC, RPF said the numbers have come down in recent years.

"We're suggesting that all passengers opt for online mode to buy tickets and this is part of the railway strategy to curb the menace of unending queues and altercations happening near booking windows. We're actively engaged in online surveillance, we have a cyber cell within the division and in that cell, we analyse the charts and ticket reservation patterns to figure out the touts," Bengaluru RPF's senior divisional security commissioner, Shreyans Chinchawade, told **TOI**.

However, the huge push towards online tickets has impacted the economically weaker sections who lack funds to pay the commission for registered agents. Migrant workers often camp in reservation offices a night before to book Tatkal tickets. One such incident at Bengaluru Cantonment last week had led to brawls between passengers over long queues.

Probe against BIAL staffer to continue

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The high court Monday refused to interfere in the investigation against a Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL) staffer accused of sexually harassing a South Korean woman passenger at Kempegowda International Airport.

Justice M Nagaprasanna dismissed a petition filed by Mohammed Affan Ahmed, a 25-year-old ground staffer who had challenged the FIR registered by BIAL police. "At immigration, you made a South Korean woman stand in a T position and touched her. Tell me, should you be spared?" the judge asked during the hearing.

HARASSMENT CASE

Referring to the complaint, the court said the woman had detailed the alleged acts. "Why did you take her to the gents' toilet? The justification is that the ladies' toilet was occupied. You take her to the gents' toilet, make her stand in T position, and touch her. What sort of an officer are you?" the judge asked before dismissing the petition.

Ahmed had sought quashing of the FIR and proceedings pending before the JMFC court in Devanahalli.

BWSSB launches OTS scheme for pending bills

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has officially rolled out a one-time settlement (OTS) scheme to help consumers with long-pending water bills.

Of the approximately 11 lakh connections, 5.1 lakh consumers have outstanding bills. The water board's Feb-end data puts the total arrears at Rs 851.3 crore, including principal amount of Rs 539 crore and accumulated interest of Rs 312 crore. To simplify clearance of these dues and ease financial burden on consumers, OTS scheme will be implemented for a three-month window — April to June 2026.

BWSSB chairman Ram Prasath Manohar said notices with payment information under the scheme will be sent out with upcoming water bills. "All necessary preparations have been completed. Eligible consumers will receive comprehensive information with this month's bill," he said.

Beyond gender: Knee replacement focus shifts to patient experience

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The debate over gender differences in knee replacement surgery is moving away from implant design towards patient experience, with doctors noting that expectations from surgery remain largely the same across men and women.

The shift in perspective was discussed at Boscon 2026, the 29th annual conference of Bangalore Orthopaedic Society, held Saturday, where clinicians highlighted that outcomes are shaped less by gender and more by when and how patients access care. "The basic question is simple — what does any patient want from a knee replacement?" said Dr Pratima Khincha, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Khincha Orthopaedic Centre. "Pain relief, ability to walk independently, climb stairs, return to work, and ultimately improve quality of life with as little medication as possible." These expectations, she said, are universal.

AI

However, data shows women often reach surgery later than men, usually with more advanced disease and greater disability. "By the time they come to us, their condition is often more advanced, and that reflects in outcomes as well," Dr Khincha noted.

A key reason is the decision-making process. Many women are not the primary decision-makers when it comes to surgery. "When patients are not the primary decision-makers, it can affect their motivation and recovery. The ideal patient is one who chooses surgery for herself," she pointed out.

Differences also emerge in perception. Doctors observed that women tend to be more apprehensive about post-operative pain, while men often focus on regaining pre-surgery activity levels. Both, however, share concerns about risks and existing health conditions.

On implant design, Dr Shrishti Patil, consultant orthopaedic and joint replacement surgeon at Sparsh Hospital, said gender alone should not dictate choices. "Every knee is different — not just female knees," she said. While anatomical differences exist — including issues like femoral overhang and anterior overstuffing more commonly observed in women — she noted that variability is wide across all patients. "Although gender-specific designs attempted to address this, these changes have not translated into meaningful clinical benefits," she said.

Question banks & blueprints to be released at start of yr

▶ Continued from page 1

DPUE director Bharat S said "standardisation (in exam process) is necessary" and ruled out immediate centralised evaluation as it involves a multi-level, logistical exercise. "We are preparing question banks and blueprints for I PU. These will likely be released at the beginning of academic year so students know what to expect," he said, adding they are expecting govt's nod for proposal.

A similar model was implemented this year for classes 6 to 9, with examinations conducted by Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board.

The common PU exam move comes as the state recorded a pass rate of 95.5% in I PU exams this year — a marginal increase from 95.3% last year. Results were announced by individual PU colleges in late March. According to data compiled from deputy directors across districts, over 6.6 lakh students registered in 2026, of whom around 6.2 lakh passed. A total of 29,021 students failed, while 11,616 were absent.

A look at district data shows that districts which logged 90-plus pass percentages in college-level I PU exam put out underwhelming performances in state-wide II PU public exam. In I PU this year, Bidar emerged as the top performer with 98.3% pass, followed by Kalaburagi at 97.9% and Yadgir 97.8%. In 2025 II PU main exam, Bidar ranked 22 among 32 districts, with a pass percentage of 67.3. Kalaburagi stood 31st with 55.7% and Yadgir hit rock bottom with 48.4%.

Chikkaballapur and Raichur also featured among top five districts in the 2026 I PU exams. Among urban regions, Bengaluru North recorded 97%, while Bengaluru South, which had the highest number of candidates at 69,840, posted 96.5%.

Belagavi recorded the lowest pass percentage at 90.2%, followed by Uttara Kannada at 91.1%, Gadag 91.6%, and Kodagu 92.5%.

10 months to repair broken ventilators at Victoria Hosp

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: In a stark reflection of delays in equipment maintenance at govt hospitals, it took nearly a year to repair ventilators at the trauma and emergency care centre (TECC) of Victoria Hospital in the city.

According to sources, eight ventilators and five electric patient cots in the ICU had begun malfunctioning in June 2025, severely disrupting operations at the centre. Over the following months, several other critical equipment, including an operation table and a CT contrast machine, also broke down. Hospital authorities initially approached the third-party service provider responsible for maintaining the equipment. "After a few months, the company began citing the ongoing war situation as a reason for being unable to procure spare parts and carry out repairs," a source at the hospital said.

File photo

LONG DELAY A total of eight ventilators & five electric patient cots in the ICU at the hospital began malfunctioning in June 2025, badly affecting operations at the trauma and emergency care centre

Dr Kavya ST, director-cum-dean of Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, under which TECC functions, said, "We issued repeated notices asking them to repair the equipment, but we were not satisfied with their service or efficiency. Hence, we decided to terminate the contract and are now directly sourcing services from the original manufacturer of the ventilators."

She added most of the ventilators have now been repaired, with the remaining expected to be fixed soon. "Even when some ventilators were not functioning, patient care was not affected as we had backup equipment," she said, adding the faulty electric cots were also replaced to ensure patient safety and comfort.

The issue also drew the attention of Karnataka Lokayukta, which recently took suo motu cognisance of irregularities at Victoria Hospital, including the malfunctioning ventilators that rendered six ICU beds unusable.

₹50k lost@ATM: Stranger cons man trying to help ailing mom

Chaithanya.Swamy
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Anxious and pressed for time, a 26-year-old man stepped into an ATM kiosk in Banashankari last week with one goal — to send money for his ailing mother's treatment. Minutes later, that urgency turned against him, as a seemingly helpful stranger walked away with Rs 50,000, leaving him with nothing but a false assurance.

According to the complaint, Shivaprakash, a private firm employee residing in Banashankari II Stage, was at an ATM kiosk between 7.10pm and 7.30pm on April 3 after learning from his elder brother, Mahendra, that their mother, Bhuma, had been hospitalised in their native village at Tiruvannamalai district in Tamil Nadu.

Urgently asked to arrange funds for her treatment, he set out to transfer money without delay.

Shivaprakash asked his wife to redeem Rs 50,000 from her chit fund and headed to the State Bank of India ATM on 9th Main Road to send the money. While inside the kiosk, visibly anxious and in a hurry, he was approached by an unidentified man in his 30s who struck up a conversation. On learning about Shivaprakash's situation and his attempt to deposit the cash into his brother's account, the stranger offered to assist him.

HOW DRAMA UNFOLDED AT CASH POINT

- Shivaprakash learns from elder brother that their mother in Tiruvannamalai is hospitalised and urgently needs money for treatment
- He asks his wife to withdraw Rs 50,000 from her chit fund and heads to SBI ATM on 9th Main Road, Banashankari II Stage

- Unknown man in his 30s approaches him, offers to help after hearing about the emergency, and suggests transferring money via PhonePe
- Trusting the stranger, Shivaprakash hands over Rs 50,000 cash and shares his brother's PhonePe details
- The man shows a fake transaction screenshot and leaves; Shivaprakash later finds no money was credited, and the accused becomes unreachable
- Accused allegedly threatens Shivaprakash; police analysing CCTV footage to trace him

Fake transaction

The stranger offered to transfer the money through a digital payment application, PhonePe, stating that he was trying to withdraw money and his debit card was not working. As Shivaprakash was in an emergency to send money for his mother's treatment, he trusted the stranger, handed over the money and shared his brother Mahendra's PhonePe details for the transfer.

Within minutes, the man claimed the transaction was complete, sent a screenshot as proof and quickly left the spot after sharing his mobile phone number. But the relief was short lived. When Shivaprakash checked with his brother, he realised that no money had been credited.

By the time he tried to locate the man, he had vanished. Calls to the number provided initially went unanswered, and the next day, the accused allegedly threatened Shivaprakash with dire consequences if he tried to contact him again.

A senior officer said the accused created a fake transaction screenshot to make it appear as if the money was transferred using AI tools, thereby cheating the victim. A case has been registered under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Sections 336 (forgery), 340 (forged document or electronic record and using it as genuine), 318 (cheating) and 351 (criminal intimidation) at Banashankari police station, and efforts are on to nab the accused. Police are analysing CCTV footage of the ATM and surrounding areas to get clues about the miscreant.

Extend free bus travel to boys too, says rights panel

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights recommended to transport dept that free travel facility currently available for girls be extended to boys studying up to class 12.

In a series of recommendations, the commission said to address the transport needs of school-going children, especially in rural areas, road transport corporations should plan bus routes based on data about students studying in schools and colleges in specific regions. The recommendations include operating special buses for school and college students.

To enhance student safety, the commission proposed mandatory installation of CCTV cameras, GPS, panic buttons and display of child helpline number 1098 in buses. It also called for basic facilities for students at bus stands.

Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) said it received the commissioner's letter but is yet to decide on extending free bus travel facilities to boys.

Onus on registered owner of vehicle till RC transfer: HC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

As a bike was involved in a fatal accident, a tribunal awarded Rs 33 lakh to the victim's kin. HC hiked it to Rs 47 lakh to be paid by the vehicle's registered owner

Bengaluru: Karnataka high court has ruled that the liability of a vehicle remains with the registered owner until the ownership transfer is officially recorded in the registration certificate (RC).

A high court division bench, comprising Justices SG Pandit and KV Aravind, made the observation recently while relying on a Supreme Court decision.

The court directed Marathahalli resident Sunil Kumar to pay the entire modified compensation of Rs 47 lakh to the family of Hanumantha, who died after being hit by a motorcycle on June 18, 2020.

However, Kumar claimed he had sold the vehicle to one Shabrez, who denied the transaction. The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal on Dec 31, 2024, awarded Rs 33 lakh to the victim's family, holding both Kumar and Shabrez jointly liable for the payment.

Both Kumar and Shabrez challenged the tribunal's verdict. The family members of Hanumantha filed a separate appeal, citing the income tax returns filed by the deceased.

Hanumantha owned earthmover equipment and was a vendor in a wine shop.

The division bench noted that the registration of the motorcycle still remains in the name of Kumar and hence he is liable to pay the compensation amount.

Division bench: Tribunal erred in calculation

The division bench pointed out that the tribunal had erred in taking the average of annual income (at Rs 2.9 lakh) of the deceased as per his income tax returns for computing the compensation amount.

"The last of the returns showing the highest income can be the basis, subject to there being a gradual increase and such return having been filed before the date of the accident. We emphasise that consistent income is the basis for the computation of compensation," the bench said.

The tribunal committed an error in taking the average income of the three years. The return nearest to the accident date was for the assessment year 2018–19 and the I-T returns were filed on Aug 29, 2018, declaring an income of Rs 3.5 lakh and after deduction of tax, it is Rs 3.4 lakh, the bench said. "We find that Rs 3.4 lakh would be appropriate to be taken as the basis for computing the compensation," the division bench observed while enhancing the compensation amount by Rs 14 lakh over and above that awarded by the tribunal.

While the appeals filed by Hanumantha's family and Shabrez were partly allowed, the one filed by Kumar was dismissed.

Underage marriage plaints dip

Shrinivasa.M@
@timesofindia.com

Karnataka is seeing a gradual decline in child marriages, with improved early intervention helping authorities stop a majority of cases, government data shows.

In 2025, officials recorded 3,044 complaints of child marriage, slightly lower than 3,127 in 2024. Of these, 2,394 attempts were prevented in 2025, up from 2,323 the previous year, while FIRs dropped to 650 from 804, indicating more cases being halted before they could take place.

Replying to MLC K Govindraj in the legislature, women and child welfare minister Lakshmi Habbalkar said that in 2023, 2,605 complaints were received, with 1,775 marriages stopped and 830 FIRs registered.

District-wise, Belagavi reported the highest number of complaints in 2025 (260), followed by Mysuru (187) and Chitradurga (181). Chitradurga, however, recorded the highest incidence of child marriages, followed by Malnad region of Shivamogga.

Officials attribute persistence of the practice to adolescent-related issues, the influence of social media as well as entrenched superstitions in some communities.

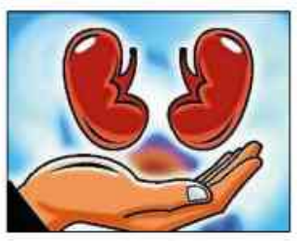
At the same time, authorities say rising complaint numbers reflect better awareness and quicker reporting. "Most complaints are received at the preparatory stage," said Mahadeva Kote, member of the Child Welfare Committee in Mysuru. "With Child Marriage Prohibition Officers now appointed at the village level, intervention is happening earlier, helping prevent marriages before they occur."

From two to many: Karnataka's kidney swap programme footprint gets bigger

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Karnataka govt Monday released updated guidelines permitting multi-pair kidney exchange (swap) transplants, broadening organ donation beyond the traditional two-way swaps to include three-way and larger combinations.

The move seeks to tackle a major hurdle in kidney transplantation: biological incompatibility between donors and recipients. Many patients are currently unable to receive transplants due to blood group mismatches, positive crossmatches or HLA (Human Leukocyte Antigen) incompatibilities. HLA incompatibility occurs when donor and recipient (or mother and fetus) have different Human Leukocyte Antigen types, prompting the immune system to recognize tissues as foreign.



Multi-pair exchange

In a standard transplant, a donor gives a kidney directly to their intended recipient. However, when they are incompatible, multi-pair swaps offer a solution: three or more incompatible donor-recipient pairs are matched in a chain, allowing each recipient to receive a compatible kidney from another pair's donor. This approach greatly improves the chances of patients in need successfully receiving a transplant.

The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA)-1994 explicitly has provisions for two-way swaps, although multi-pair swaps have been authorised by committees on a case-by-case basis in many states across the country. The order issued by Karnataka govt has emphasised that according to the Act, there is no legal prohibition on multi-pair exchanges. The move follows legal opinion and a Supreme Court judgment supporting broader interpretation of the law.

Under the new guidelines, donors must be close relatives of their intended recipients, and each pair must have documented medical incompatibility. Donors, however, need to be compatible with the recipient they are matched with in the swap pool. All participants are required to sign a joint agreement, and the process must undergo comprehensive medical, psychological, and legal evaluations. Any commercial transactions are strictly prohibited.

Auto drivers seek ₹15k monthly aid

Bengaluru: Autorickshaw unions have urged the Centre and state govt to provide financial support to drivers in the wake of an acute shortage of auto LPG and rising fuel prices. They have also announced a protest at Freedom Park on April 9, demanding immediate steps to ensure adequate LPG supply.

PROTEST ON APRIL 9

CN Sreenivas, president of Autorickshaw Drivers' Union, said the crisis has severely impacted livelihoods. "Auto drivers are forced to wait for four to five hours every day to refill fuel. More than 80% of private bunks have shut; the remaining are charging exorbitant prices. Auto drivers are losing income due to the shortage of auto LPG and sharp rise in prices. At private outlets, drivers are being forced to pay Rs 120-125 per litre," he said.

The unions have demanded govts provide interim financial assistance of Rs 15,000 per month to autorickshaw drivers until the supply situation stabilises.

RTC employees' rally tomorrow

Association of Unions of Karnataka Road Transport Corporations has announced a protest march from Chitradurga to Bengaluru, pressing state govt to release 38 months of pending salaries and implement a pay revision. TNN

Neighbour's pet dog attacks boy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: An 11-year-old boy was attacked allegedly by a neighbour's pet dog while cycling between 8am and 8.30am on March 21 in Rajajinagar. His mother (41), an advocate, filed a complaint with Subramanyanagar police on March 26.

According to the complaint, a Belgian Shepherd was being taken for a walk by its owner, Madhu alias Madhusudhan. The dog attacked her son's left leg and he fell from his bicycle, the mother told police. However, the dog owner left the spot with his pet without helping the boy.

A senior police officer said a case was registered under BNS Section 125(a) (act endangering life or personal safety of others) at Subramanyanagar police station. Since the case is registered under bailable charges, the accused cannot be arrested immediately, but will be issued a notice. The boy is receiving, the officer added.

Teen's murder: Spl prosecutor named; cops push for conviction

Rajiv.Kalkod@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Police intensified efforts to secure a conviction in last year's abduction and murder of a 13-year-old boy by strengthening their legal approach. As part of this push, the govt has appointed a special public prosecutor (SPP) to lead the trial.

The case relates to the abduction and killing of Nishchit A, a class VIII student, who was kidnapped on the night of Aug 30, 2025, while returning home from tuition in Hulimavu. His half-burnt body was found the next evening in Bilvaradahalli forest area of Bannerghatta.

Investigators say the crime was orchestrated by S Gurumurthy, 25, who worked as a driver for the boy's family, along with his associate P Gopi, 27. The duo allegedly plotted the kidnapping to extort Rs 5 lakh. Both the accused were later tracked down, shot at and injured during police action,

.S Gurumurthy (L) and P Gopi

and later arrested. They remain in judicial custody at Bengaluru Central Prison after the court denied them bail.

Two chargesheets and 126 witness statements

Police have built an extensive case, filing chargesheets running into 1,565 pages within a tight timeline. The preliminary chargesheet of 1,347 pages was submitted within 60 days of arrest, followed by a supplementary one of 218 pages. Together, they include statements from 126 witnesses.

Police commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh said the appointment of SPP Ashok Naik, approved by the home department, reflects the seriousness of the case. Ashok Naik was the SPP in the Prajwal Revanna case which ended in conviction. Unlike regular prosecutors, an SPP focuses solely on a single case, allowing closer attention to detail during trial.

"It was a heinous case where two men masterminded the kidnap for ransom and later killed him, the only child of his parents," Singh said.

The investigation, led by DCP (Electronics City) M Narayana, relies on a combination of eyewitness accounts, digital tracking and circumstantial evidence. Witnesses reportedly saw Gurumurthy taking the boy on a motorbike on the night of the kidnapping.

Police have also compiled CCTV footage from 17 cameras to reconstruct the route taken by the accused, including visuals of them buying snacks at a bakery and purchasing petrol in a bottle from a fuel station.

Daycare chemotherapy gaining traction in govt hosps amid rising cancer cases

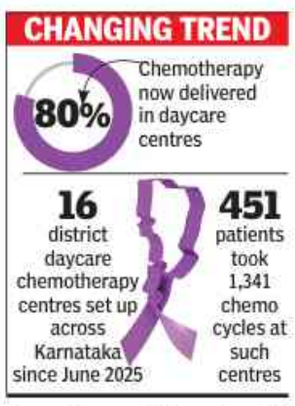
Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: As the cases of cancer continues to rise in Bengaluru and across Karnataka, hospitals are increasingly shifting chemotherapy delivery to daycare centres, with nearly 80% of patients now receiving treatment without overnight admission. This marks a steady decline in inpatient chemotherapy over the years.

Daycare chemotherapy centres are designed for short-duration treatments, allowing patients to return home the same day while reducing hospital costs and easing bed occupancy.

Vasantha (name changed) took all her six chemotherapy sessions at the daycare centre of a private hospital. "At the age of 70, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and after the surgery in Sept 2025, I was advised to take a few cycles of chemotherapy. I chose to get it in a daycare centre as it meant I could get quality rest in the comfort of my home," she said, adding it was also more financially viable for her as most of the cost was covered under insurance.

CHANGING TREND



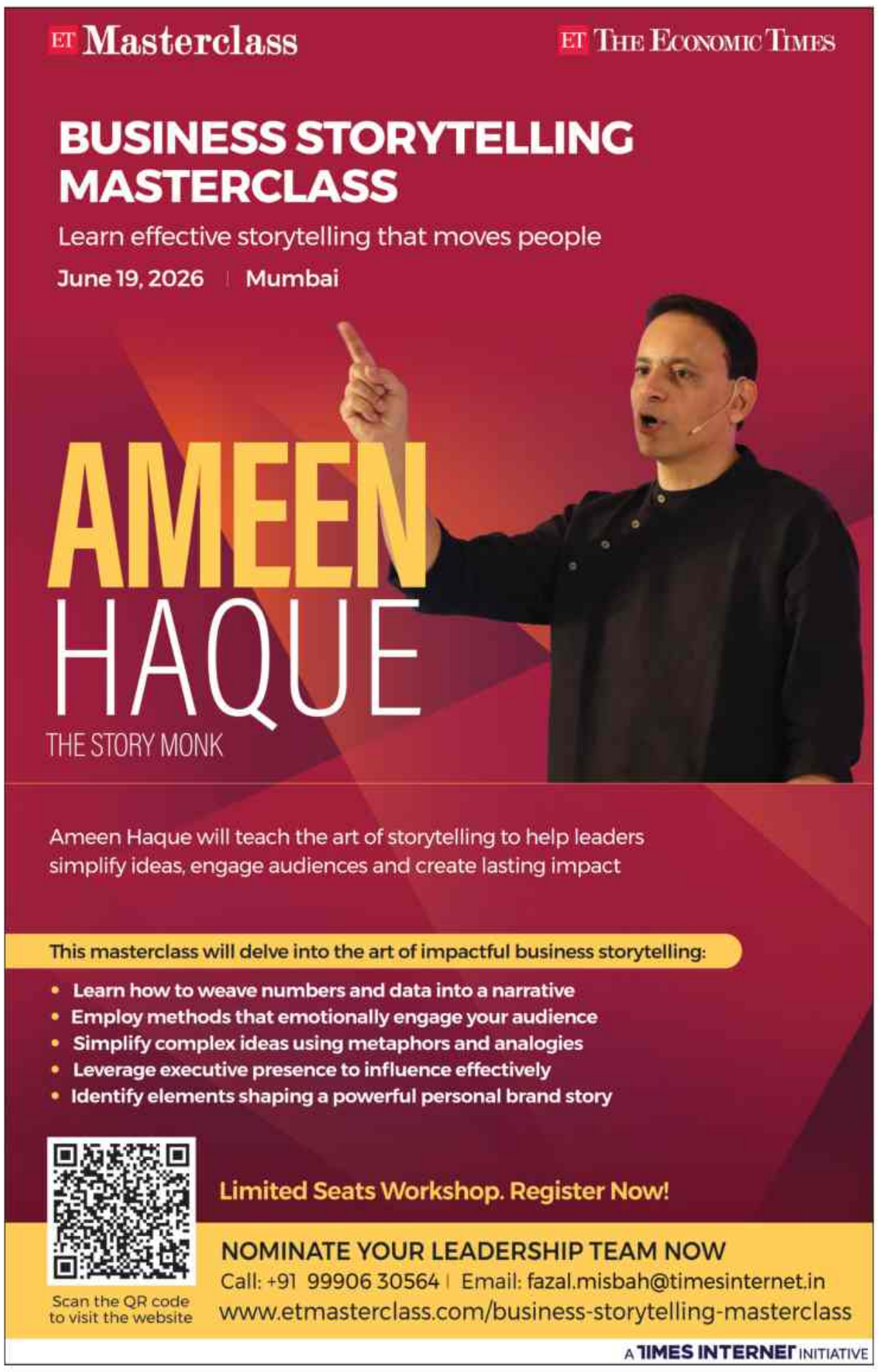
In June 2025, Karnataka govt established district daycare chemotherapy centres (DDCCs) in 16 district hospitals to reduce the patient load at Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO), the state's premier cancer care centre. Since then, 451 patients have received 1,341 chemotherapy cycles at these centres. "These centres operate on a hub-and-spoke model, and any complications or queries are escalated to KMIO," said Dr Raghunandan, deputy director, non-communicable diseases, health department.

KMIO is also supporting the DDCC at Mysuru District Hospital, where 32 patients have undergone 112 chemotherapy cycles so far. "The centre is particularly preferred by patients from outside Bengaluru. Many begin treatment at KMIO and continue subsequent cycles in Mysuru. Patients from Mysuru, Mandya, Chamarajanagar, and Kodagu frequently access this facility," said Dr Naveen T, director of KMIO.

Doctors attribute this shift to advancement in cancer therapy.

"More patients are opting for daycare treatment because of better tolerability, shorter infusion times, lower infection risk, cost-effectiveness and minimal disruption to daily life," said Dr Murali Subramanian, director of daycare clinics and senior medical oncologist at HCG Cancer Hospital.

Dr Amit Rauthan, HOD and consultant – medical oncology, immunotherapy and precision medicine at Manipal Hospital, Old Airport Road, said: "We have around 32 beds in our daycare centre and at least 30 are occupied daily. Except for about 10% of complex cases like sarcoma or leukaemia, and another 10% of patients apprehensive about side-effects, most receive chemotherapy exclusively in daycare settings."



It's Meti legacy vs Chairman's clout in UKP territory

Sangamesh.Menasinakai
@timesofindia.com

Bagalkot: A high-stakes contest shaped by legacy, caste equations and development promises has turned the Bagalkot assembly bypoll into one of the most closely watched political battles.

Necessitated by the death of former minister HY Meti, and although nine candidates are in the fray, it has narrowed to a fight between BJP's seasoned Veerabhadrayya alias Veeranna Charantimath and Congress first-timer Umesh Hullappa Meti. The contest is widely seen as a test of experience versus legacy.

Charantimath, a three-time MLA contesting his sixth consecutive election, brings organisational depth and an urban support base. Umesh, the son of HY Meti, is relying on sympathy, rural connect and Congress govt's guarantee schemes.

Chief minister Siddaramaiah has invested significant political capital, camping in the seat for over a week. The stakes are both political and personal. Meti, from the Kuruba community to which the CM belongs, was considered a key supporter. Some 20 Congress ministers who have been assigned different roles have framed the contest as a referendum on the govt's performance, with Siddaramaiah urging voters to consider himself as the candidate.

The bypoll is equally crucial for BJP. Victory in this Lingayat-dominated seat is being seen as a test for state president BY Vijayendra, a Lingayat, and a boost ahead of the 2028 assembly polls.

This is the third bypoll in the seat since 1952. In 1962, S Nijalingappa entered the assembly from here unopposed and became CM. In 1998, PH Pujar's win marked BJP's first breakthrough in the constituency. Since 2004, the seat has largely oscillated between Charantimath and HY Meti, turning it into what local observers describe as a "snake and ladder" rivalry.

Charantimath, known locally as 'Chairman' for his long tenure at Basaveshwara Veerashaiva Vidyavardhaka Sangha overseeing over 160 educational institutions, draws mixed reactions. While some credit him for discipline and development, others point to his temper. His associate Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, Vijayapura MLA, said Charantimath should smile and offer visitors tea or coffee.

Umesh, though new to electoral politics, has built rapport in rural areas but many say he is not an acquainted face like his sisters. Women voters appear inclined towards Congress guarantees such as Gruha Lakshmi, though many remain non-committal in public. Male voters are more vocal about their preferences.

Development issues dominate. The long-pending demand for higher compensation for those who lost land to the Upper Krishna Project (UKP) remains central. The proposed third phase of the project is a key talking point, with the CM and his deputy DK Shivakumar, who holds the water resources portfolio, announcing plans to spend over Rs 30,000 crore.

But scepticism persists. While Congress cites fresh allocations, voters say promises of Rs 75,000 crore in the 2023 campaign translated into only about Rs 9,000 crore. BJP, in turn, faces questions over delays in Union govt approvals.

A proposed govt medical college is another talking point. Charantimath criticised repeated announcements since 2016 without execution, while Congress alleges he stalled the project to protect interests of an institution run by his network. The contentious proposal to shift Aihole, a heritage village with over 120 temples and caves, also figures in the campaign. Both parties have promised action, but residents say little progress has been made.

Adding intrigue, Yatnal, expelled from BJP, has been actively campaigning, citing Hindutva and his friendship with Charantimath. His presence, despite tensions with BJP brass, has drawn attention as he can draw votes.

CONSTITUENCY PULSE — BAGALKOT

2023 results

HY Meti CONGRESS	Vote share: 46.5%

Runner-up: Veeranna Charantimath (BJP) — Vote share: 43.1%

ELECTORATE

	1,26,761
	1,32,576
	23
Total	2,59,360

FACTORS THAT MATTER
1 Legacy vs experience
2 Caste dynamics
3 Development-welfare delivery

MAIN CANDIDATES FOR 2026 BYPOLL

Umesh Hullappa Meti
CONGRESS

Veeranna Charantimath
BJP

Both are novices to electoral politics, but the contrasts between the two main candidates in the Davanagere South bypoll cannot be starker. Srinivas Dasakariyappa, a long-time BJP worker and state ST Morcha vice-president, has an IT background. His Congress rival, Samarth Shamanur, 27, is a newbie, but is from a family steeped in politics. In interviews with ***Basavaraj Maralihalli****, Dasakariyappa stressed development, while Shamanur touted inclusive growth*

Case of electoral fresher taking on newbie in Davanagere South

BJP

Not sympathy or caste, but devpt key: Dasakariyappa

There are claims BJP avoided fielding a Lingayat to indirectly benefit the Shamanur family...

■ BJP is the largest party in the country, and its principles are different from Congress. A ticket was given to an ordinary worker based on a calculated winning strategy, not to favour an opponent. BJP does not favour any caste or family.

As an SC candidate in an unreserved seat, how are you building support among Lingayats?

■ I have never engaged in caste politics and have maintained relationships with people across communities. My candidature reflects acceptance among Lingayats and all forward communities, and I am confident of their support.

Do you expect discontent among Muslims over denial of the Congress ticket for the community to work in your favour?

■ For 23 years, Muslims in the segment have sought the Congress ticket but were ignored. This time, dissatisfaction has grown, and many have joined hands with BJP to support my candidature.

Congress is banking on a sympathy wave. How are you countering it?

■ There is no sympathy wave. The family already wields immense power as ministers and MPs, yet the constituency lacks development. There is no basis for sympathy.

DANCE of DEMOCRACY

Why should voters choose you?

■ Davanagere South lacks basic amenities like roads, drainage systems, drinking water and hospitals. My priority is to provide these and create jobs by attracting industries.

CONGRESS

Fresh perspective, inclusive growth my focus: Samarth

Having studied abroad and with limited local engagement, what prompted your entry into politics?

■ Studying abroad exposed me to global governance models and efficient administrative systems. Politics, for me, is about purpose. I felt a responsibility to bring back what I learned and apply it locally, especially in infrastructure, education and youth empowerment.

Muslims are unhappy since Congress has overlooked long-time party workers like Sadiq Pailwan...

■ I respect the contribution of every grassroots worker, including senior members like Sadiq Pailwan. Decisions are based on experience, public opinion and strategy. I see myself working alongside senior members, not replacing them.

How do you plan to tackle dissatisfaction among Muslim voters?

■ Concerns of any community must be addressed with sincerity. My focus is on education, employment, safety, and equal opportunity. I will engage with community representatives, youngsters and women to ensure inclusive development.

With several Muslim candidates in the fray and the initial absence of minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, will it affect your prospects?

■ Not at all. The presence of senior functionaries helps, but elections are ultimately decided by people and grassroot strength. Zameer has now joined the campaign. Our effort is driven by strong local leadership, dedicated party workers, and trust of the people.

Why should voters choose you?

■ I bring a fresh perspective and focus on infrastructure, jobs, transparent governance, and civic issues. My promise is accessible leadership and consistent delivery for the people of Davanagere South.

SHORT TAKES

Recount Sringeri seat postal ballots, says HC

The Karnataka high court ordered officials to recount 279 rejected postal ballots and declare the result to Sringeri assembly constituency afresh. Justice R Nataraj passed the order after allowing an election petition filed by DN Jeevaraj, the defeated BJP candidate. In the 2023 polls, TD Rajegowda of Congress emerged winner by 201 votes. Jeevaraj challenged the result, arguing postal ballots were not properly counted.

Meeting on auto LPG shortage on Friday

Food, civil supplies & consumer affairs minister KH Muniyappa said a meeting will be held Friday to resolve supply disruption of auto LPG. The shortage, aggravated by price hikes by private oil companies, has led to long queues at fuel stations across the state. After meeting representatives of auto drivers' associations, Muniyappa said, "Auto drivers are in distress. We will hold a meeting with private company representatives, Union govt officials, Indian Oil Corporation coordinators, police and senior officials to resolve the issue." He said the Centre supplies 3,000 cylinders daily, but price hikes by private suppliers are causing inconvenience.

No CM change: HM

Home minister G Parameshwara said Siddaramaiah will serve as CM for the full five-year term under the "current situation," stressing that any change rests solely with Congress' high command. On Deputy CM DK Shivakumar's prospects, Parameshwara said the high command's decision is final. Responding to confusion on the issue, he asked, "Who created confusion? Did the high command do it?"

BJP: Report says Cong will lose

Bengaluru: BJP claimed the govt's own intelligence report suggests Congress will lose both the Bagalkot and Davanagere South assembly bypolls.

Opposition leader R Ashoka alleged "confusion within Congress", citing Muslim voters moving away in Davanagere South and family infighting in Bagalkot. He criticised the Siddaramaiah government for "zero development" and delayed payments under guarantee schemes, calling Karnataka a "debt-ridden state". TNN

Criticism over dynasty politics, caste flows as campaigning goes up a notch

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Davanagere/Bagalkot: Senior Congress and BJP functionaries sparred Monday over dynastic politics, governance, and community mobilisation as campaigning in the Davanagere South and Bagalkot assembly bypolls went a notch with only two days left.

Union minister Pralhad Joshi accused Congress of monopolising Davanagere South through one family. "First the grandfather was MLA and minister, then the son became MLA and minister, while his wife became MP, and now the grandson has been given a ticket to become MLA," he said. "This concentration of power threatens democracy."

He compared the family's dominance to the Gandhi family at the national level and alleged that "ill-gotten wealth was being used to influence elections".

Joshi added that Congress's governance had failed, citing mismanagement in schemes such as Anna Bhagya. He contrasted this with the Union govt's handling of fuel and LPG supplies, asserting that despite global disruptions, domestic reserves were adequate.

Chief minister Siddaramaiah fired a salvo of his own, pointing out that those who criticised BJP and RSS in the past — a pointed reference to Chalavadi Narayanaswamy — were now aligned with the party. "Those who joined BJP did so to preserve political relevance. On what moral basis can they criticise Congress?" he asked.

He also responded to HD Kumaraswamy's remarks that the Gowda family "did not practise dynastic politics" but were pushed into the electoral fray only because people wanted it, by pointing to his son's loss in Channapatna. "It's contradictory to claim popular support after being rejected by voters. Contesting elections is fine if people want it, but results speak for themselves," Siddaramaiah said.

In Bagalkot, former CM and BJP MP Basavaraj Bommai accused the state govt of neglecting SC, ST, and OBC communities. "Without political power, justice cannot be achieved," he said, citing incidents during Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti. Bommai warned voters not to sell their votes for temporary benefits and stressed the need for long-term development.

BJP state president and MLA BY Vijayendra said the bypolls were a tough test for the state govt and Siddaramaiah. Speaking in Davanagere, he said Siddaramaiah "had failed to deliver development despite 17 budgets" and criticised the govt's portrayal of the guarantee schemes as actual progress. "Even minorities now see the party shedding crocodile tears," he said.

IANS

HOPING FOR SUCCESS: Union minister HD Kumaraswamy of JD(S) offered prayers at Shri Banashankari Ammanavaru of Badami, in Bagalkot on Monday. SL Bhojegowda, party MLC, was also present

K'taka could get only 66 LS seats: Parameshwara

Mysuru: Home minister **G Parameshwara** endorsed CM Siddaramaiah's criticism of the Centre's intended delimitation of Lok Sabha seats, saying Karnataka may get only 66 — up from current 28 — if population alone determines allocation. "CM Siddaramaiah said population cannot be used as a criterion; he is correct," Parameshwara said. "South Indian states effectively implemented family planning, which reduced our population. This can't be a disadvantage. North Indian states have a higher population which means they will get more seats."

On the two-language policy debate, he said opposition to Hindi is long-standing. "Even during my student days, we raised slogans like 'Down with Hindi'. There has always been a demand that regional languages should get proper representation. We demand it for Kannada, while Andhra Pradesh and Telangana demand it for Telugu."

Asked about LPG shortages, he said: "The Centre may make assurances, but it must translate into supply. Everyone knows there is a global issue, but the Centre must ensure minimum supply of LPG, petrol and diesel."

Parameshwara reaffirmed the govt's stance on internal reservation saying the govt is "committed to implementing it". On reports of misuse of IPL tickets by MLAs, he said: "Tickets are booked online, and cannot be transferred, so others cannot use it." TNN

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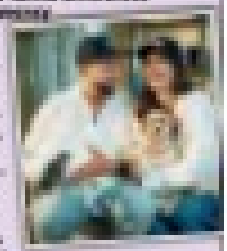
"You continue to guide us every day. Your memory is the source of our strength"
Founder
ELECTRONICS & CONTROLS
POWER SYSTEMS PVT. LTD.

OBITUARY
REMEMBRANCES
11th Death Anniversary

CELINE NORONHA
Our Mother, Our Pride
You will be missed every single day of our lives!
With love from
Pat, Sam & families

WHAT'S #TRENDING AND WHY

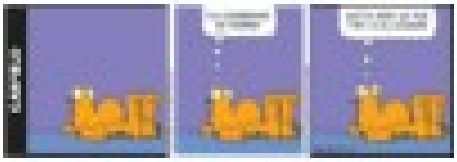
₹4.48 lakh for a watering can? Louis Vuitton's new bag trends online

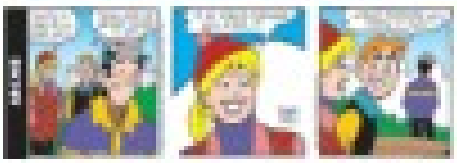


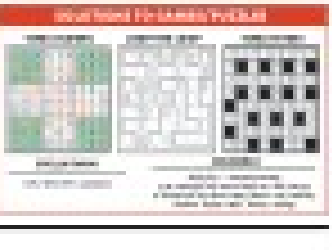
THEATRE REVIEWS

This Kannada spin on The Comedy of Errors delivers big laughs

LEISURE







TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026

GAURAV GOGOI DARES ASSAM CM TO DENY WIFE'S FOREIGN ASSET CLAIMS UNDER OATH ON GITA

NCP CHIEF SUNETRA PAWAR FILES NOMINATION FOR BYPOLL, APPEALS CONG FOR 'UNOPPOSED ELECTION'

Woman gathers proof, forces cops to reopen dead son's case

Spent 18 Months Collecting Evidence After Probe Closure

Kalyan.Das@timesofindia.com

Dehradun: A single mother in Dehradun forced police to reopen the hit-and-run case of her 18-year-old son after spending 18 months gathering evidence on her own, following the closure of the probe with a final report saying "the unidentified driver could not be traced". Her son, Chitij Choudhary, was killed on Feb 16, 2024, a day before he was to appear for UP Police entrance exam, when a truck fatally hit him from behind in Premnagar and fled.

For Lalita Choudhary, 43, who works as a beautician and raised Chitij and his elder sister alone after separating from her husband around a decade ago, the case turned into a long fight for justice after she felt police were not moving fast enough. She told **TOI** that her son lay unattended on the road for about 45 minutes before a passerby called an ambulance, and he died in hospital the next day after doctors amputated his leg. "My son was left to die on the road. Nobody came to help him for 45 minutes. He died almost like a stray after being hit by a vehicle," she said.

Lalita said Chitij had gone out that night to help his cousin negotiate a land deal and was crossing the road around 2.45am when the truck hit him. After completing the last rites, she got an FIR registered on Feb 19 under IPC sections 279 and 304A, but said her repeated visits to the police station yielded no progress. "I was told they did not have a magic wand to solve the case," she said, adding that the reply made her realise she would have to fight for justice on her own.

HIT-'N'-RUN CASE

- After little progress in police probe, accident victim's **mom collects CCTV** of hit-and-run vehicle
- Police accuse her of **complicating probe**
- Police's **final report** says **unidentified accused untraced**
- Victim's mom **identifies truck, owner, driver.** SSP orders reinvestigation

6 yrs on, court orders murder charge on 4 cops

A Ludhiana court has ordered murder charges against four cops, including an SHO, in custodial death of recovery agent Deepak Shukla six years ago, **reports Payal Dhawan**. Earlier, the cops were booked under charges of culpable homicide. The court has ordered charges under relevant sections of IPC. "After considering the evidence on record and applying judicial mind, this court is satisfied that there exists sufficient ground under section 204 CrPC to proceed against the accused under sections 302, 166, 166-A, read with section 34 IPC," the court order stated.

After performing her son's final rituals on Feb 26, Lalita began searching for evidence from Feb 27 and started trying to obtain CCTV footage to identify the truck. She said she managed to get footage of the incident after 11 days, but when she took it to the police station, officers blamed her for circulating it widely and complicating the probe. She then continued tracking the truck and its driver herself.

Her setback came in Sept 2025, when she learnt that the investigating officer had filed a final report saying the unidentified accused could not be found. Lalita said she broke down at the police station and pleaded with officers to continue the probe, but when nothing changed, she intensified her effort and eventually identified the truck, its owner and the driver after 18 months of pursuing the case.

The breakthrough came when she met farmer leader Rakesh Tikait during a demonstration in Dehradun on Friday in the presence of Dehradun SSP Pramendra Dobal and other senior police officers. Lalita said Tikait urged him to act, after which she was asked to come to the SSP's office Saturday with the evidence.

Taking note of the material, Dobal ordered a re-investigation in the case. Dehradun (City) SP Pramod Kumar said, "A thorough probe will be carried out and strict action will be taken against the accused." **TOI** did not get response from the investigating officer.

Scam-ridden Mahadev app back as 'Mahaadev' for election, IPL bets

Madhu.Rasala
@timesofindia.com

For Bengal polls, bets are being placed on seat projections for alliances led by BJP and TMC, and include both seat-range predictions & odd-even outcomes on total seats

Hyderabad: Betting app Mahadev, whose controversial run was halted by a Rs 6,000-crore money laundering investigation by ED in 2023, has resurfaced as "Mahaadev" on the sidelines of IPL and poll season.

TOI, which gained access to the platform by registering as a punter, found betting options extend to a variety of alliances and seat projections in polls across Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry. While everything is fair game for betting in sport — football, tennis, basketball, volleyball, ice hockey, rugby, horse racing and cockfighting — Mahaadev stretches boundaries in wagering even on politics.

For Bengal elections, bets are being placed on seat projections for alliances led by BJP and TMC. In Assam, the focus is on NDA and Congress-led Asom Sonmilito Morcha alliance. Similar markets exist for Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Bets include both seat-range predictions and odd-even outcomes on total seats, with standardised odds and limits typically set between Rs 100 and Rs 10,000. The interface also includes adult-oriented "strip games", where users pay and animated characters perform actions based on the wagered amount.

The betting interface operates as a real-time wagering system aligned with live events. During IPL matches, users can place bets not only on match outcomes but also on granular in-game events such as runs scored within specific overs, predictions on the fall of wickets and ball-by-ball outcomes. Each market displays dynamic odds and "Yes/No" options, enabling continuous betting throughout the match.

HACK OF THE DAY — **DOWNLOAD MAPS BEFORE YOU LOSE SIGNAL**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Helps you navigate in airports, road trips, unfamiliar cities, and patchy-network areas without depending entirely on mobile data

WHAT TO DO: Use Google Maps offline maps before a trip so your phone can still guide you when the connection is slow or unavailable

STEPS:

1. **Open** the Google Maps app on your phone
2. **Tap** your profile picture and open "Offline maps."
3. **Select** "Select your own map" and frame the area you need
4. **Download** the map before you travel
5. **Update** saved maps when Google warns that they are about to expire

NOTE: Offline maps are most useful for driving. If you are offline, features like live traffic, alternate routes, transit, bicycling, and walking directions may be limited

SCAN FOR MORE

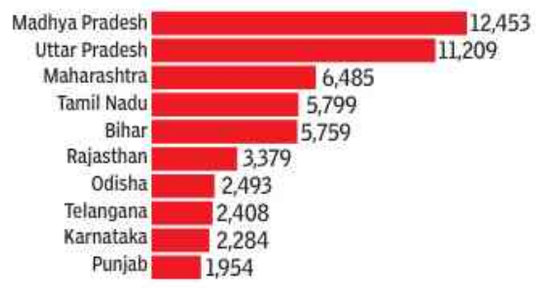
Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

STATISTICS — A slice of life in numbers

MP and UP account for over 1/3rd of India's hit-and-run cases

Hit-and-run accidents rose nearly 28% from 53,623 in 2020 to 68,584 in 2024. Large, populous states like MP and UP drove much of the surge, with MP alone accounting for 18% of total national cases

Statewise no. of hit-and-run cases in 2024*, top 10



*2024 data is provisional; **Source:** Min of road transport & highways

SUV breaks into high-security Delhi assembly complex, flees

Driver Places Bouquet Outside Speaker's Office, Held Hours Later

Raj Shekhar Jha & Abhay | TNN

Tarun Rawat

The bouquet of red flowers left behind by Sarabjit Singh (inset), who was in the high-security premises for 6 minutes before fleeing

New Delhi: A major security breach sparked panic at the Delhi assembly on Monday afternoon after a speeding SUV entered the premises crashing past multiple checkpoints. The car bypassed security cordons and rammed through one of the gates, forcing its way into the high-security zone.

Before security guards could lock down the perimeter, the driver executed a swift maneuver and sped back through the breached gates, vanishing into the afternoon traffic. Fortunately, the high-stakes manhunt ended just two hours later when alert cops in Roop Nagar spotted the vehicle following a pan-Delhi BOLO (Be On the LookOut) alert flashed by the police.

The accused driver was identified as Sarabjit Singh (37), a resident of Pilibhit, UP, who cops said was under psychiatric treatment and allegedly looking for a missing relative. He has been arrested.

The white Tata Sierra (UP26AZ8090) entered assembly premises at 2.11pm through gate no. 2. Breaking through barricades, it advanced towards the office of assembly speaker Vijender Gupta.

"A man aged 35-40 years stepped out of the vehicle and walked towards the porch area carrying a bouquet and a marigold garland. The Vidhan Sabha was not in session. He stopped near the porch, placed the bouquet there before fleeing," said a senior cop. Police denied reports that he threw ink on the speaker's vehicle.

Singh, who had his face covered with an orange scarf, drove rashly, allegedly attempting to run over security personnel on duty. "He broke through the gate & boom barrier. He tried to leave the bouquet and the garland inside the speaker's vehicle and was confronted by a staff member," said a source. The episode lasted only six minutes.

During interrogation, Singh did not disclose any clear motive behind the incident. Preliminary inquiry revealed that he left Pilibhit on April 1 and had been missing from home for five days prior to the breach.

"Family members told us that his behaviour becomes erratic during periods of illnes," police sources said.

By all accounts, it was a major breach of security. Speaker Vijender Gupta had visited the education department office at 1.32pm and returned to the assembly premises about 20 minutes later. He entered his office at 2.06pm.

HC told 2 Hindu idols found at Bhojshala during colonial era

Indore: At a hearing on the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula mosque dispute case on Monday, Indore bench of Madhya Pradesh high court was informed that there were, in fact, two idols — of Vaghdevi (Goddess Saraswati) and Amba — recovered from the Bhojshala site in Dhar during the colonial period and presently housed in the British Museum in London, **reports Salil Mekaad**.

The counsel for Hindu Front for Justice, advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, made the submission before HC, which began final hearing in the case. "This is not a case for ownership or possession. This is a case for the right to worship," he submitted.

The petition referred to an order dated April 7, 2003, issued by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under which Muslims are permitted to offer namaz at the site on Fridays and Hindus are allowed to worship on specified occasions like Basant Panchami. Jain said the order was legally untenable, as it was issued without any prior determination of the true character of the site.

Advocate Jain said courts must take judicial notice of historical texts, gazetteers and scholarly works in matters involving ancient history. The hearing will resume today.

Ch'garh ex-CM's son gets life term for '03 killing of NCP neta

Partha.Behera
@timesofindia.com

Raipur: Chhattisgarh high court on Monday sentenced **Amit Jogi**, son of the state's first chief minister, Ajit Jogi, to life imprisonment after convicting him on April 2 of involvement in the 2003 murder of NCP politician Ram Avtar Jaggi.

A division bench of Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha and Justice Arvind Kumar Verma held, while overturning Amit's 2007 acquittal, that he was the murder "mastermind". The April 2 judgment, a copy of which was made available on Monday, said the trial court verdict was "palpably illegal, wrong, perverse, and contrary to the evidence on record".

The HC found that evidence — including witness testimonies, call records, financial transactions, and meetings among the accused — clearly established his central role in the conspiracy. It observed that the trial court had erred in acquitting Amit while convicting other co-accused based on the same evidence. It noted that no valid distinction could be made when all were part of a common conspiracy.

Jaggi, the then state NCP treasurer, was shot dead on June 4, 2003 in Raipur, ahead of the assembly election. Investigators alleged the murder was part of a plan to disrupt a rival political rally.

HC convicted Amit under IPC Sections 302 (murder) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy), and fined him Rs 1,000. He was ordered to surrender within three weeks. Amit has termed the verdict unjust and said in a video posted on his social media handle that he has approached Supreme Court. SC will examine HC's orders and is expected to pass its decision on April 20, he said, according to PTI. The HC ruling comes after a 23-year legal battle, highlighting the intense political rivalries surrounding the 2003 Chhattisgarh assembly elections.

Amit Jogi, president of the Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J) since his father's death in 2020, won Marwahi assembly seat in 2013 as a Congress MLA by a record margin. He and his father were expelled from Congress in 2016 for alleged anti-party activities, including sabotaging a bypoll. In the 2023 assembly election, Amit Jogi contested against former CM Bhupesh Baghel from Patan constituency and lost.

'Lack of evidence': SC frees ex-constable after 12 yrs in jail for murder

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Punished with life imprisonment and in custody for the past 12 years for allegedly killing his superior for not granting leave, Supreme Court on Monday declared a former constable with Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) innocent for lack of evidence and directed his release.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma noted the conviction was based on circumstantial evidence, which did not conclusively proved his involvement in the case. The bench said the evidence showed that the superior was killed by a rifle bearing butt number 351 but the accused's rifle's butt number was 329 and it was difficult to accept the contention that the rifles got inadvertently exchanged 10 days before the incident.

"It is difficult to accept that in a disciplined force, exchange of rifles allotted to two jawans would remain unnoticed for 10 long days. Significantly, the duty register for 18th May, 2014 (date of incident) was not led in evidence. In the absence of other cogent evidence to support this circumstance, in our opinion, it would not be safe to sustain the conviction on mere suspicion," the bench said.

"It is trite law that every link in the chain of circumstantial evidence must be conclusively established. Even a single missing or weak link may prove fatal to the prosecution's case. The chain must be so complete as to point unerringly to the guilt of the accused, and to no one else. In the present case, the evidence on record falls short of the standard of proof required in criminal law and does not exclude every reasonable hypothesis consistent with the innocence of the appellant."

SC said he was granted liberty to seek reinstatement before his appointing authority with such other consequential benefits. "If any prayer in this behalf is received, the appellant's appointing authority shall take an expeditious decision thereon in accordance with law. Should the appellant be not found so capable, he may be financially compensated adequately," it said.

Academicians say blacklisting has grave implications

▸ Continued from page 1

Appearing for the three, advocates Arvind Datar, Gopal Sankaranarayanan and Sai Deepak told SC that blacklisting of the academicians has grave implications and requested a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi to urgently take up for hearing these applications.

CJI Kant asked, "Are you defending your actions?" Sankaranarayanan said, "We are giving a context (to what was written in the Class 8 book). I was present when the newspaper article was mentioned before the court and told how the judiciary is being singled out (on prevalence of corruption)."

For Prof Danino, Datar said, "The court may consider his detailed explanation." Deepak said, "It was a collective effort, and no individual had the final say (about the chapter)." SC directed the registry to list the application for hearing. On March 11, SC had said the academicians concerned "either had no reasonable knowledge about the judiciary or deliberately and knowingly misrepresented facts to project a negative image of Indian judiciary before students."

Delhi HC: CM's public assurance not enforceable in law

Abhinav.Garg@timesofindia.com

Will argue own plea, Kejriwal tells court

New Delhi: A chief minister's public assurance would not be enforceable in law, even if the citizens to whom it was made believed it to be so, unless backed by a policy decision, Delhi high court said Monday.

HC modified a 2021 decision of a single judge on the issue and noted a statement by then CM **Arvind Kejriwal** — made at a press conference on March 29, 2020 — that the state would pay rent on behalf of migrant tenants during the Covid-19 lockdown can't be enforced legally. There was no follow-up official documentation in the form of an order, office memorandum, notification, circular or any other instrument having the force of law, a bench of Justices C Hari Shankar and Om Prakash Shukla noted.

"The assurance was apparently made in the heat of the situation, which was unquestionably unprecedented," the court observed, adding that it appeared to have been taken "on the spur of the moment" to prod migrant tenants to remain indoors, but it was without any legal authority.

New Delhi: Former CM Arvind Kejriwal Monday appeared in person before Delhi HC seeking recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma from hearing a CBI petition challenging his discharge in liquor policy case, **reports Abhinav Garg**. The judge listed it for hearing on April 13.

Arvind Kejriwal said he would argue the application himself. "I will exercise my legal rights. Right now, I have not issued *vakalatnama* to anyone," he said. The court sought CBI's reply to the plea by Tuesday. Solicitor general Tushar Mehta opposed the plea and contended Kejriwal should discharge his lawyer if he wanted to appear in person in the case.

HC said while CM's statement carried a qualitatively different gravitas than a mere campaign promise, it still required support of a formal executive order. The case stemmed from a petition filed by five daily wagers who were unable to pay rent during lockdown and wanted govt to fulfil CM's announcement.

After Kodagu cliffhanger, Kerala trekker sets sights on Tawang

Rajeev KR | TNN

Kozhikode: Tech professional GS Sharanya, who went missing during trekking in Madikeri of Karnataka Thursday forenoon and was dramatically rescued Sunday evening, said the ordeal has not shaken her love for extreme adventures. Her next stop: Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. Of course, subject to parents' nod.

Speaking from her home in Nadapuram here, Sharanya said deep forests of Kodagu didn't evoke fear in her; rather, she was enchanted by its striking beauty and quiet companionship. With a touch of poetry, she said, "As darkness fell, the forest slowly came alive — first, with the sound of cicadas; then, with fireflies. It seemed like a full moon and the night was so bright one could not sleep. It was my first time inside the forest, and the night was beautiful."

The trekker survived on three litres of water a day and bananas. Sharanya said she did not encounter any wild animals during her ordeal, except for monkeys. She did notice elephant dung. "I was curious whether small animals would come to the stream (where I had stayed put). The spot felt relatively safe." She tried calling for help, but "the gushing sound of the flowing stream and dense surroundings made me feel no one would hear me."

Recalling how she lost way on April 2, Sharanya said that after reaching the summit of Tadiandamol, the highest peak in Kodagu district, she and two others began descent around 10.40am. When she looked back, she saw the two resting and decided to wait for them. After a while, they were no longer in sight. She then noticed other members of the group still at the peak. She attempted to climb back towards them via a path on her left, but lost sight of them as she ascended.

She tried following Google Maps. "Around 2pm, I briefly got a mobile network. I called the Kodagu homestay (where I had checked in) and informed them I had lost my way," she said. She experienced severe leg pain as she had trekked in tough terrain from 8am to 6.45pm.

The next day, she remained in an open area so that search teams or drones could easily spot her. On the third day, her plans to reach higher ground were disrupted by heavy rain. On Sunday, as she started to walk to the top, she heard some people calling out. "I responded, shaking a tree to signal my location," she added.

MP farmer chases away cheetah from fields

Bhopal: An elderly farmer in MP's Morena district chased away a cheetah that had strayed close to fields and buffaloes, preventing a possible attack. Officials say the incident reflects how both cheetahs and locals in the Kuno landscape are gradually learning to coexist. The incident took place around 4pm on Saturday in Madanpura village, where farmers were busy collecting harvested wheat.

Locals said a cheetah from Kuno National Park entered the fields and moved towards grazing buffaloes. As panic spread, an elderly farmer stepped forward, shouting loudly and running towards the animal to drive it away. Despite family members urging him to stop, he continued to chase the cheetah until it retreated from the area. Villagers said the big cat appeared to be targeting livestock, and the farmer's quick action helped prevent any loss. Officials said such encounters are now being handled more calmly. "People are learning how to respond. TNN

'Being honest with the story is the only way forward in this world of AI'

I'm used to the rejection, but now I am slowly stopped. I need a script that sells me and I know it is ok. When writing this it - Some words are a lot

Writers of Little Things and Me'ta of Bollywood, Shreyas Ashok and Kirti Siddhi respectively, talk about writing in a tech, end-of-days and film-changing creative landscape

'Unique voices and stories find their audience'

'A film was also the approach'

When you use AI, the output is only as good as the input. If you don't know much, you can't use it effectively. A film is very much the approach, not a tool

Billion it or not!

Say cheese! Carlsen smiles, poses, & rats out

A selfie with conditions

Smiles off, game on!

Times when Carlsen outfoxed the arbiter

Paws, people, and pastels: Global traditions kick off Easter weekend

Science says mayonnaise is actually an instrument

POLL VAULT

Menaka Guruswamy meets RS chairman CP Radhakrishnan after taking oath as an MP in New Delhi on Monday

Modi calls Cong 'mithya ki dukaan'

PM Modi on Monday wrapped up campaigning for Assam polls, mocking Rahul Gandhi's "mohabbat ki dukaan" pitch and branding Congress a "mithya ki dukaan", while targeting the Gandhi family over corruption, dynastic politics and "singing Pakistan's tune". Addressing rallies in Barpeta, Hojai and Dibrugarh, Modi said, "The first family of Congress is most corrupt."

TMC candidate booked for vandalising BJP office

An FIR was registered against a TMC MLA and a few party workers in Bengal after BJP accused them of vandalism at its office in Parnasree area of Kolkata on Sunday. Six TMC workers have been arrested so far. The FIR names Ratna Chatterjee (TMC candidate from Behala West) and six others. "If EC is acting on BJP's instructions, what can be done? We have to accept it," Ratna said.

EC seeks report on 'love jihad' speech

EC on Monday sought a report from Thiruvananthapuram district collector over BJP's Kattakkada candidate P K Krishnadas's controversial speech saying the victory of LDF or UDF would promote 'love jihad' in Kerala. Krishnadas alleged that LDF and UDF were hand-in-glove with Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI), and that votes in favour of either front would lead to widespread incidents of 'love jihad'.

Campaign ends today, Kerala all set for a layered contest

Rajiv.G@timesofindia.com

Thiruvananthapuram: As campaigning ends Tuesday evening, Kerala's electoral narrative has evolved into a layered contest, shaped by competing welfare promises, allegations of "unholy deals" and a triangular dynamic in key constituencies, more than just a choice between continuity and change.

Manifesto politics across the CPM-led LDF, Congress-led UDF and BJP-led NDA has converged around expansive welfare guarantees, turning the election into a "battle of guarantees". While the LDF anchored its pitch on governance continuity, welfare delivery and infrastructure expansion, the UDF projected itself as a transparent, reform-driven alternative. The NDA, meanwhile, blended development messaging with identity-based mobilisation.

▶ Leap Of Faith In Kerala, P 12

Charges of covert alliances dominated the campaign, with both LDF and UDF accusing each other of acting as the BJP's "B team".

The support of Muslim organisations like SDPI and Jamaat e Islami also led to fresh allegations. Interestingly, all fronts kept the Sabarimala gold scam largely on the backburner, reflecting the political sensitivities involved. Concerns within the Christian community over proposed changes to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010, along with the BJP's new ally T20, could definitely influence the electoral outcome.

At the centre of the contest is chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, with voters weighing whether to grant the LDF an unprecedented third consecutive term, breaking Kerala's long-standing pattern of alternating govts. The ruling front faces signs of anti-incumbency, concerns over economic management and elements of governance fatigue.

ANI

Karnataka deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar campaigns for Congress candidate K Muraleedharan in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday

The UDF, led by opposition leader V D Satheesan, has focused on alleged misgovernance, corruption and administrative drift. Backed by senior national leaders, it has framed the election as a decisive moment for change. Its prospects, however, depend on converting this narrative into seat-level gains, especially in closely fought constituencies.

The BJP, a marginal player in the state till now, is making a renewed push to expand its footprint, particularly in urban centres. In constituencies such as Thiruvananthapuram, contests have taken on a sharper triangular edge, with the party's recent local body performance adding momentum.

It could play spoiler by altering vote shares in tight races. Despite the dominance of statewide narratives, electoral dynamics remain deeply localised. In the final stretch, constituency-specific issues have shaped voter sentiment across regions.

Allies UBT, Cong at odds over bypoll fight in Baramati

Chaitanya.Marpakwar @timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Sena UBT Monday criticised Congress for announcing its candidate for Baramati bypoll, saying in its mouthpiece Saamna that the party's approach of "keeping a distance" without considering allies' sentiments was narrow-minded. Sena UBT also blamed the "chaos" in Maharashtra on the hasty 2021 resignation of then assembly Speaker, Congress neta Nana Patole.

Congress hit back at Saamna executive editor and UBT MP Sanjay Raut, saying that in playing both journalist and spokesman, he gets confused. Congress' Sachin Sawant said Raut has developed the misconception that whatever UBT Sena says is always right.

The Saamna editorial said, "If there had been dialogue, MVA would have remained in power for at least 15 years. They left Speaker's post without consulting anyone, creating a crack in the govt." It added that the governor later did not allow the Speaker's election, derailing the alliance's efforts.

Sunetra files for Baramati bypoll

NCP chief and Maharashtra deputy CM **Sunetra Pawar** on Monday filed her nomination for the Baramati bypoll, the family's traditional seat vacated after husband Ajit Pawar's death in a plane crash in Jan.

Despite appeals for an unopposed election, Congress has fielded Akash More. Sunetra's son Parth said the move would mark Congress's "downfall" in the state. However, NCP-SP chief Sharad Pawar said there was nothing wrong with Congress' decision, while acknowledging a sympathy wave for Sunetra. TNN

HC gives bail to jailed BJP functionary to fight WB polls

Kolkata: The Calcutta high court on Monday granted bail to Rakesh Singh, a BJP functionary in jail for five-and-a-half months in an assault case, for contesting the assembly polls from Kolkata Port seat.

HC allowed Singh's bail plea after Bengal BJP submitted a letter stating that his name had been proposed for candidature. The court, however, barred him from leaving the constituency, except for filing a nomination or attending vote counting. Kolkata Port is the only constituency in Bengal where BJP has not yet announced its nominee.

BATTLEGROUND WEST BENGAL

After securing bail, Singh posted an old photograph with a victory sign on his Facebook account. "Despite the atrocities by the goons of minister Firhad Hakim, truth has prevailed. After 163 days of struggle, the court has delivered its verdict in our favour in 16 false cases," he wrote in the post. TNN

Shah vows to make Pondy IT, industrial hub

Puducherry: Union minister **Amit Shah** on Monday said Puducherry would be developed into a major industrial and IT hub if NDA is voted back to form govt again in the UT.

Shah accused the previous Congress govt of pushing the UT backwards, citing irregularities to the tune of Rs 15,000 crore flagged by CAG. He said, NDA govt, however, reduced unemployment in the UT from 47% to 4.3%.

Announcing welfare measures, Shah said monthly aid for fishermen will be increased from Rs 8,000 to Rs 12,000, while annual financial aid for farmers would be raised from Rs 6,000 to Rs 8,000. TNN

With fake firm in Gogoi's name, Sarma fights back

Prabin.Kalita @timesofindia.com

Guwahati: Assam CM **Himanta Biswa Sarma** said Monday he registered a company in Wyoming in the names of state Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi and his wife Elizabeth Colburn to show how easily shell entities can be created online, pushing back against allegations targeting his family.

He rejected claims that his wife Riniki Bhuyan Sharma held multiple foreign passports, calling documents circulated by Congress "doctored" and allegedly sourced from a Pakistani social media group. "This is not a fraud but a crime against the nation," he said, alleging an attempt to "vitiate election atmosphere".

Sarma said the entity "GauravElizabeth786 LLC" was set up for $199 as a "fake" firm. "Point is how anyone can create a company," he said. Records show it was filed on April 5. He claimed UAE, Egypt and Antigua and Barbuda govts had confirmed the passports were fake, citing inconsistencies.

Congress netas Pawan Khera and Gogoi had alleged offshore assets.

BATTLEGROUND ASSAM

Didi: CEO went to Nandigram with BJP netas

Kolkata/Bethuadahari (Nadia): Bengal CM **Mamata Banerjee** on Monday claimed the state's chief electoral officer's visit to East Midnapore's Nandigram over the weekend, "accompanied by BJP netas", indicated he was "in cahoots with the saffron party".

"The EC is acting like a puppet of BJP.. Will there be a democratic retaliation against this BJP?" she asked at a poll rally in Nadia's Bethudahari.

Giving "another example of EC bias", she said, "Massive security is provided to each BJP neta. They are reducing the security of TMC people."

The Bengal CM expressed apprehensions that central forces will be used in the polls as "BJP's agents". She will file her nomination on April 8. TNN

Polls in Assam disrupt life in Kerala and UP

Kochi/Lucknow: Assam assembly polls have set off a cross-country labour vacuum, disrupting waste collection in UP's Lucknow & thinning workforces in Kerala as thousands of migrant workers return home to vote on April 9, **report MK Sunil-Kumar & Mohsin Usmani**.

Kerala is seeing one of the sharpest impacts. Migrants from Assam and Bengal form nearly 60% of its workforce, and a large share has headed back, leaving gaps across construction, plywood and other labour-intensive sectors. Perumbavoor, a major migrant hub, has thinned out visibly.

Driving the exodus is not just voting. The SIR of electoral rolls has triggered anxiety among migrants over possible deletion of names and alleged risks to citizenship status. "They are returning for assembly elections because they fear losing citizenship if they fail to vote," said Benoy Peter, of the centre for migration and inclusive development.

BATTLEGROUND KERALA

Kerala's planning board estimates the migrant population at around 40 lakh.

Construction has slowed, with contractors halting or stretching timelines for residential, commercial and roadside projects. Retail activity is also hit. In Lucknow, more than 200 sanitation workers employed by private agencies have left for Assam, disrupting door-to-door garbage collection.

SC fast-tracks Nandalal Bose's grandson's case

Kolkata: SC Monday requested the SIR appellate tribunal to hear painter Nandalal Bose's maternal grandson Suprabuddha Sen's appeal against deletion of his name from Bengal's poll roll expeditiously.

The names of Sen and his wife Deepa (82) were struck off despite submitting documents, including educational certificates and passports. Advocate Menaka Guruswamy, for the state, said Sen's family had lived for generations in Santiniketan. "We would not have any illustrations in the Constitution if not for his grandfather," Menaka told the bench.

Sen said he had already appealed before the tribunal and applied as a new voter. Senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, for the EC, assured full assistance to the tribunal. TNN

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GUNASEKARAN. S S/o Sambandabadran R/o No.605, 5th Main, BCMC Layout, Near Water Tank, Raghuvanahalli, Bangalore-560062 changed the name of my minor daughter Krishika G, aged 16 years, and she shall hereafter be know as KRISHIKA GUNASEKARAN, vide affidavit dated 01.04.2026 before XXIX ACJM Court, Bengaluru.

I, Modi Ankit Rajeshbhai, formerly known as Ankitkumar Rajesh Modi, resident of Flat No. 118, Block-A, Neeladri Sarovaram, Varthur, Bengaluru – 560087, do hereby declare that both the names refer to one and the same person and henceforth I shall be known as Modi Ankit Rajeshbhai for all purposes. Date: 3/4/26 Place: Bengaluru

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ms. Subhajyoti Pradhan, D/o. Mr. Basant Kumar Pradhan , aged about 27 years, residing at 153/37, 8th Main, 1st A Cross Rd, BTM 1st Stage, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560029, have changed my name from Ms. Subhajyoti Pradhan, to Ms. Sahiba Khan as per Affidavit No. IN-KA41104570794438Y, Affidavit dated 02.01.2026 issued by Notary Public - SIVAKUMARA M N.

"I, Vashist Venkat Raghavan, S/o Venkat Raghavan, residing at Janapriya Saidarshan apartment, Seegehalli, Bangalore, have changed my name from Vashist Venkat Raghavan to Vasisht Venkat Raghavan via Affidavit No. IN-KA25459938007864Y dated 02-Apr-2026, I shall henceforth be known as Vasisht Venkat Raghavan

I, Dilipkumar Jahagirdar, R/at F.No. 5084, Tower 5, Golden Panorama, 80 Feet Road, Off Kanakapura Main Road, Gubbalala, Bengaluru 560061, changed my name as DILIPKUMAR RAMARAO JAHAGIRDAR, vide affidavit before Notary L Puttaraju, dtd 12/03/2026

I, Roopa Dilipkumar Jahagirdar, R/at F.No. 5084, Tower 5, Golden Panorama, 80 Feet Road, Off Kanakapura Main Road, Gubbalala, Bengaluru 560061, changed my name as ROOPA JAHAGIRDAR, vide affidavit before Notary L Puttaraju, dtd 12/03/2026.

I, Rohit Kumar, R/o 797, 2nd Cross, Arekere, B'lore, changed my minor daughter's name Ivanya Kashyap to Ivanya Shree vide affidavit dtd: 4/4/26 before Notary KV MANI.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VEDA SATYABODH KADNI W/o. Satyabodh Narayan Kadni residing at C2 BLK1, Samhita Castle, Nagwar Palya, C V Raman Nagar, BENGALURU, PIN: 560093 declare that I have changed my name from VEDA SATYABODH KADNI to VEDA KADNI and henceforth I shall be known as VEDA KADNI in all purpose, vide affidavit dated 06.04.2026 sworn before notary Chandrakala, Bangalore.

I, AAHANA SATYABODH KADNI D/O Satyabodh Narayan Kadni residing at C2 BLK1, Samhita Castle, Nagwar Palya, C V Raman Nagar, BENGALURU, PIN: 560093 declare that I have changed my name from AAHANA SATYABODH KADNI to AAHANA KADNI and henceforth I shall be known as AAHANA KADNI in all purpose, vide affidavit dated 06.04.2026 sworn before notary Chandrakala, Bangalore.

I, SHWETHA SHASHI KUMAR alias SHWETHA B S W/o Shashi Kumar G, R/a No.47 6th Cross, AECS Layout, RMV 2nd Stage, Sanjay Nagar, Bangalore -560094. have changed my name to SHWETHA BHADRAVATHI SURESH Vide affidavit dated 02.04.2026 sworn before Notary Ambika.s, Bangalore.

I, Salini Nair Kuruvath W/o Anil Kumar Nair R/o E-02, IInd Floor, Shriram Blue Apartments, Kurudusonnenahall, Post Office - Virgonagar, Bengaluru, have changed my name to Shalini Nair.

tender & notices

TENDERS

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tender & notices

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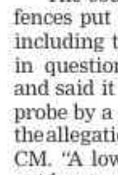
GET NOTICED

EAM speaks to Iranian counterpart, stresses support for stopping war

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Referring to the importance of efforts to restore stability and security to the West Asia region, external affairs minister **S Jaishankar** stressed India's support for ongoing regional and international efforts to stop the war in a conversation with his Iran counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi, according to an Iranian readout released Monday. Apart from Araghchi, Jaishankar had on Sunday also spoken to his counterparts from Qatar and the UAE.



According to Iran, Araghchi spoke about the "heinous crimes" committed by the American and Israeli aggressors against the Iranian people, including attacks on Iran's industrial and production infrastructure, as well as its "peaceful and safeguarded nuclear facilities, and the continued rhetoric by American officials openly threatening to attack Iran's energy infrastructure". He also reminded the international community and the UN of their responsibility to confront "law-breaking and the normalisation of war crimes".

Qatar too released a readout of the conversation that its foreign minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani had with Jaishankar in which they reviewed military escalation and its serious repercussions on regional and international security and stability.

The Qatar minister stressed the need to halt the "unjustified Iranian attacks" on Qatar and other countries in the region, warning against the irresponsible targeting of vital infrastructure, particularly that related to water, food, and energy facilities.

He also emphasised the need to strengthen coordination, intensify joint efforts to contain the crisis.

Prices of essential commodities stable: Govt

New Delhi: Govt on Monday said prices of essential commodities were stable despite the ongoing crisis in West Asia while asserting that there was no "unusual volatility". It added that agencies were closely monitoring both wholesale and retail markets across the country, and there was enough stock of key staples — pulses, wheat, rice and sugar.

Addressing an inter-ministerial briefing, Anupam Mishra, additional secretary in consumer affairs department, said, "What we have seen so far, there has been no unusual volatility in prices of essential commodities. The department is tracking prices of 40 essential commodities on a daily basis across 528 centres, with both wholesale and retail rates updated through a mobile application." TNN

23-yr-old Jammu youth killed in Russian war zone laid to rest

Jammu: On Sept 13, 2025, a 23-year-old Jammu youth, who had travelled to Russia a little over a month ago with dreams to land a job, made a WhatsApp call to his family, informing them that he was being sent to the frontlines in the Russia-Ukraine war, and pleading for help. That was the last time Sachin Khajuria's family heard from him.

Believed to have been killed in Sept last year, Sachin was cremated amid an outpouring of grief in his village, Pahariwalla in Akhnoor, on Sunday, after his mortal remains arrived earlier in the day, reports **Sanjay Khajuria**.

Sachin Khajuria is the second person from Jammu to have died in the Russia-Ukraine war. In Feb last year, the body of 24-year-old Manjinder Singh from R S Pura sector of Jammu, had been repatriated under similar circumstances.

SC asks CBI to register PE within two weeks

▶ Continued from page 1

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria said the state and its instrumentalities cannot confer benefits according "to the whims of any political or administrative functionary".

The court rejected all defences put by the state govt, including that the contracts in question was miniscule, and said it was a fit case for probe by a central agency as the allegation was against the CM. "A low percentage cannot become a licence. It cannot be a defence to nepotism. It cannot neutralise the illegality that attaches to an award which is not supported by transparent process and contemporaneous records," the bench said.

"Records disclose repeated resort to non-tender methods in relation to public works, repeated absence of recorded reasons explaining why competition was dispensed with, and repeated non-production of vouchers and tender-related documentation in relation to projects of substantial value," it said. Such circumstances raise legitimate concerns not merely of administrative irregularity, but of possible abuse of public office, manipulation of procurement processes and concealment or destruction of official records, matters requiring probe by an independent agency vested with statutory powers of criminal investigation, the SC said.

It directed the CBI to register a preliminary enquiry (PE) within 2 weeks, and said it will, in particular, examine awards allegedly given to relatives of political functionaries, scrutinise procurement processes, and the reasons and approvals for dispensing the projects through open tender. The state will make available all relevant records to the agency for scrutiny of the contracts awarded from Jan 1, 2015, to Dec 31, 2025, SC said.

Judge calls custodial death 'a social evil'

▶ Continued from page 1

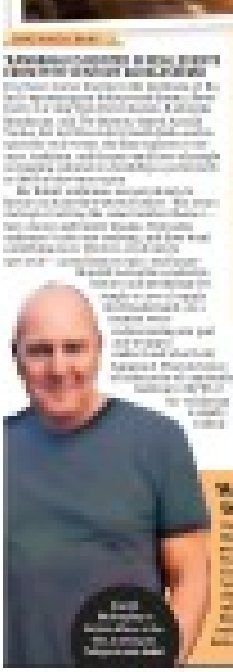
They were brutally assaulted in the lock-up at night and moved to Kovilpatti sub-jail the next day. Beniks died of injuries at Kovilpatti govt hospital on June 22. His father Jeyaraj died the next day. Their deaths triggered a public outcry across TN, prompting Justice P N Prakash of Madras HC to take cognisance and order that the case be transferred to CBI.

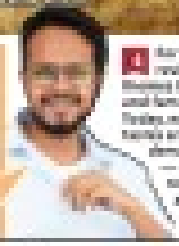
"If not for the high court, the truth regarding the crime would have been buried along with the mortal remains of the duo," sessions judge Muthukumaran said. "Jeyaraj was tortured after an altercation with the policemen and Beniks faced the same when he questioned the illegal detention of his father. The act was committed with deliberate intent to instil fear in the public."

The court slapped cumulative fines of over Rs 1 crore on the nine convicted cops – inspector S Sridhar, sub-inspectors K Balakrishnan and P Raghu Ganesh, head constables S Murugan and A Samadurai, and constables M Muthuraja, S Chelladurai, X Thomas Francis and S Vailmuthu. A tenth suspect, former special SI Paldurai, died of Covid in 2020. The court pronounced all 9 surviving accused guilty of committing murder in custody on March 23.

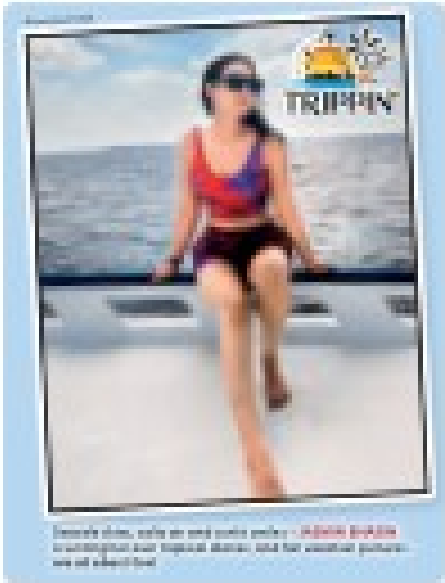
The judge noted that this wasn't the first custodial death and neither was it going to be the last. "Such incidents are occurring everywhere," he said, mentioning the George Floyd case in US and recent custodial death of B Ajith Kumar, a temple security guard, at Thiruppuvanam in Sivaganga. "Where there is power, there should be responsibility. The (Tuticorin) incident was an attack on human rights," the sessions judge said, calling custodial death "a social evil" committed by policemen who were mentally sound & educated govt employees drawing salaries.

'We're telling a story from the South that deserves to be heard'

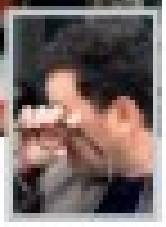




We've been too afraid to make jokes: Kudrow



Dan Levy struggles to hold back tears in emotional return to Schitt's Creek



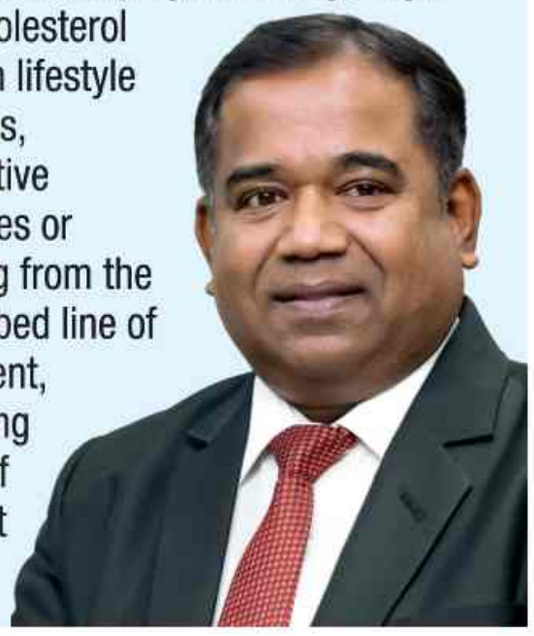
HEALTH AWARENESS INITIATIVE

TIMES OF HEART HEALTH

NOVARTIS

Medication is the strongest weapon we have against heart attacks

Dr B Dinesha, Director of the Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research in Bangalore, believes that trying to manage high LDL cholesterol through lifestyle changes, alternative therapies or straying from the prescribed line of treatment, is putting yourself at great risk



Q. Why are individual LDL cholesterol goals important?

Individual LDL cholesterol (LDL-C) goals are important because they help to prevent heart attacks, strokes and reduce the risk of plaque burden. Eventually the accumulation of plaque [in the arteries] will cause a heart attack or a stroke. Many patients have comorbid conditions like diabetes or hypertension, or have a history of smoking or drinking, so lowering LDL-C will reduce their risk of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD). If you target lowering the LDL cholesterol [based on the individual's existing health and conditions] it will give better mortality benefits for the person.

LDL or low-density lipoprotein cholesterol is the bad kind of cholesterol that travels from the liver to the arteries, cells and other parts of the body and accumulates there. So if you reduce that deposition in parts of the body – in the heart, kidneys, brain, lungs, everywhere - the risk will come down.

In India, we take the baseline for LDL-C to be 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dl). But last year, both the Cardiologists Society of India (CSI) and the Lipid Association of India (LAI) published guidelines saying that the LDL-C should be less than 55 mg/dl for some patients. So if a person consistently has an LDL-C count of more than 100 – say, 150 or 198 – s/he is likely to have a heart attack, stroke or some other cardiac event eventually in life. Since every individual is different, in terms of genetic disposition, diet and lifestyle and habits, the target has to be specific to that individual.

Then there is familial hypercholesterolemia (FH), which is a genetically-proven predisposition for high LDL-C level in a particular individual's blood that leads to him/her eventually experiencing early cardiovascular diseases, early stroke, early renal impairment, early peripheral vascular disease etc. Other than comorbidities and FH, there are other things that set one person's risk apart from that of another. These are lifestyle factors. Those who consume red meat, smoke and drink, and have a sedentary lifestyle, will have a higher chance of developing high LDL-C, which leads to complications and cardiac events.

Q. Now that we have established the importance of individual LDL-C goals, how do you make people understand risk stratification and the fact that their goal should be based on their particular risk factors?

We have to educate people in various ways, particularly about the lack of standardised guidelines in India. That is the one barrier. The LAI and CSI guidelines are specific to the Indian scenario, so that could be the starting point with lipid management. Many people are not even aware of the role of LDL-C in a heart attack, so they need to be educated as well, through the print, visual or social media. Or through healthcare workers.

As of now, out of 100 people only 17 may know about ASCVD. Many are also taking suboptimal treatment for LDL-C, and they don't even know it. In fact younger people with a genetic predisposition [for cardiac events] remain severely under-diagnosed. So I request all citizens of India to undergo - once a year or once in two years - a lipid profile, blood sugar and blood pressure test to ascertain whether or not they have any risks. Testing is the only way to find out [since high LDL-C doesn't come with any symptoms]. Most patients believe that if they exercise and eat right, they are healthy and do not require any kind of LDL-C management. But they are wrong.

The worst part is most people do not adhere to the prescribed treatment, even if they have already had a heart attack. They tend to stop taking their medication after six months or a year, and this leads to a further burden of LDL-C and overall mortality in society. There is also some discrepancy in laboratory reports. Some say 100mg/dl of LDL-C is normal, and some put this at 150. This ambiguity also causes confusion among people and needs to be addressed, which the LAI and CSI have attempted to do.

Q. What are the consequences of not staying on goal with your target LDL-C levels, especially if you have already suffered a cardiac event?

Most people, once they achieve the target LDL-C goal of less than 100 or less than 55, stop treatment believing that they no longer need it. What they don't realise is that you have to maintain your target LDL-C level for life; It is not a one or two day programme. You must take your medication till your last breath. Otherwise you may suffer another cardiac event or heart attack, and the second one will be more severe than the first.

> **"You have to maintain your target LDL-C level for life; It's not a one or two day programme."**

Q. To create greater awareness about LDL-C management, should these conversations start at the general practitioner (GP) level?

Yes, first at the GP level and later at the medical college or super speciality hospital level. All doctors should educate their patients about this. Everyone should know about LDL-C and the risks it poses, either individually or in general. But the irony is that GPs, though they may be knowledgeable, are busy seeing 100 to 200 patients a day. They don't have time to explain things to patients. So people must be educated through other means, such as the media or frontline healthcare workers. That way, we can hope that in five years, about 50% of the Indian population will be aware about LDL-C. Let me give you an example. The literacy rate in India at the time of Independence was 8.5%. Today, 78 years later, it is almost 63%. So we can hope that knowledge about LDL-C will spread in the same way. In this day of extensive mobile and internet penetration and technological advance, reachability is no longer a problem.

Q. Are people more regular with testing and screening today, or are they still very lax?

In Bangalore, where I live, I've found that people have become better informed and more alert about heart health since Covid, and testing has significantly increased. Not just the lipid profile, but other tests too. I think in the post-Covid years, people experienced not just heart attacks and strokes but also other illnesses, and this has increased their willingness to test.

Q. What are the challenges to managing LDL-C cholesterol in India, and how can we overcome these?

First, to treat or keep LDL cholesterol low, we require a medical line of treatment. The drugs we have in our armoury are good, but they're underutilised. Doctors are under-prescribing doses; a patient who is supposed to take 40 mg (because of some lipid abnormality) is being recommended 10 mg.

Second, some drugs, although useful, are expensive. So patients take them for six months and then either stop or downgrade their dose on their own. Even though the government is providing various subsidies, heart health drugs have to be taken for life, so it's a long-term expenditure which pinches many patients. So lack of adherence to treatment is a challenge.

Third, a lot of people opt for alternative therapies. Our Indian mindset is more attracted to ayurveda than allopath, and many people believe alternative treatments have fewer side effects. This is not scientifically proven, nor is the efficacy of alternative medicine for cardiac issues. So when people with high LDL-C or those who have suffered a cardiac event, go for cheaper, alternative therapies, they are putting their lives at great risk.

It is true that our healthcare system needs reform. We must create more cost-effective strategies. And, at the same time, encourage people to adopt more healthy lifestyles, with exercise, better diet and regular testing.

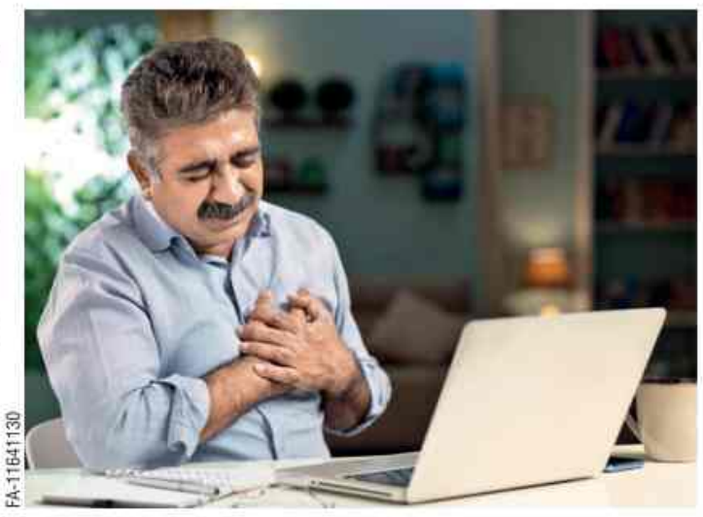
> **"Awareness should start first at the GP level and then at the hospital level. All doctors should educate their patients about LDL-C and the risks it poses."**

Q. What are some common myths around LDL-C and what are the facts?

Everybody says cholesterol is bad, but the truth is our body needs a minimum quantity of it (even LDL cholesterol) to synthesise hormones, cells and Vitamin D etc. Also, eating cholesterol-rich food doesn't raise cholesterol levels – this is also a myth.

Second, a person who looks apparently healthy may still have considerable cardiac risks. He may have a family history of poor heart health that makes him vulnerable as well.

And last, lots of patients are reluctant to take medication for their heart, preferring to improve their condition by making lifestyle changes instead. However, the real weapon against cardiac events is not diet and exercise: It is medication. Nothing else can manage high LDL-C levels.



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In India, we have a large population of young people who should be taught all about heart health and LDL-C from the school or college level. Otherwise we suffer a huge burden or cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). Every Indian contributes to the country's growth, development and GDP. We want to create a healthy India so that we can have an economically-strong India as well.

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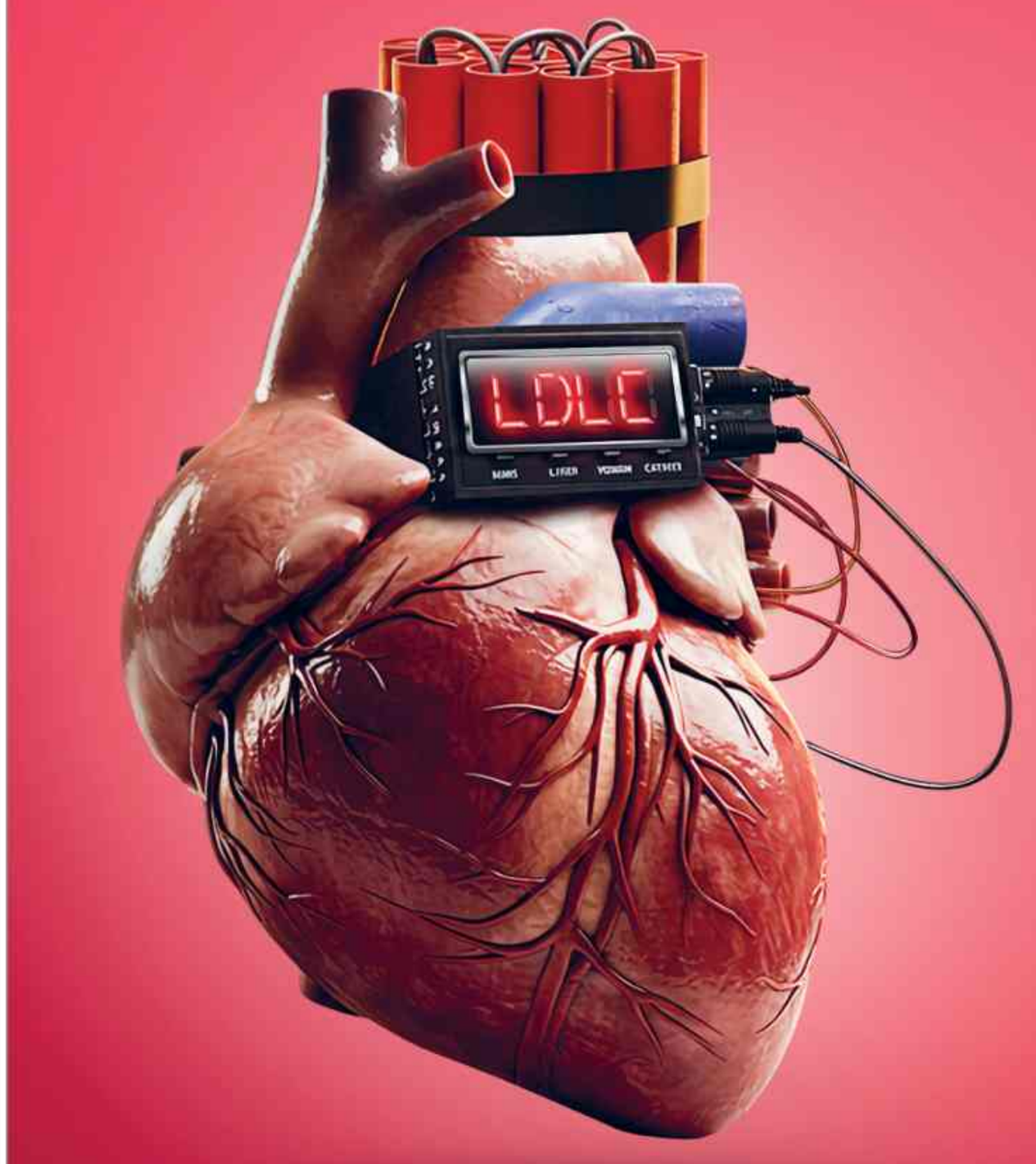

Does your heart have a ticking time bomb?

LDL* Cholesterol silently builds up in your arteries blocking them over time. Blockages due to LDLC are responsible for over 85% heart disease.[1]

Reference: World Health Organization. Cardiovascular diseases. Available at https://world-heart-federation.org/world-heart-observatory/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23006198159&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI-aKI37LfjwMVucA8Ah1IZSISEAAYAiAAEgLYXPD_BwE

*Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol

NOVARTIS PRESENTS

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

CHANGE Begins Here

K'taka pet parent held after dog dies from heat, suffocation in locked car outside Panaji casino

Panaji: Panaji police detained a Karnataka native on Monday after his Golden Retriever died from heat and suffocation in a locked car while he spent over four hours at a casino, **reports Ramit Mehrotra**.

The pet parent, identified as Bharat KC, allegedly left the dog in the vehicle without keeping any of the windows partially open for ventilation. The heat – maximum temperatures in Panaji are currently in the range of 31-33 degrees Celsius – didn't help. The Golden Retriever tried to chew through the car mat in distress before suffocating, said Stephen Samuel, field officer of the District Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The organisation wrote to Panaji police, requesting them to register an FIR, secure CCTV footage from the vicinity of the casino to identify the vehicle and have it seized.

"Panaji Animal Welfare Society informed us about the trapped pet and a resident present at the scene called police. By the time police arrived, the dog suffocated to death due to extreme heat and lack of oxygen inside the car," Samuel said. This is the fifth instance of a pet dying in the area under similar circumstances. "In the previous four cases, we weren't able to take action. This time, we will aggressively pursue the case," Samuel said.

An autopsy has been scheduled for Tuesday to determine the medical cause of the dog's death.

The complaint mentions that anyone keeping an animal as a pet is legally responsible for its well-being and that leaving the dog in the car was a" deliberate act of negligence that directly caused the animal's death".

Samuel urged people not to leave dogs unattended in vehicles for more than 30 minutes and keep windows partially open for ventilation while preventing the animal from jumping out. He said people ferrying pets in their cars should always park in the shade.

LS, RS reject oppn notice for motion to remove CEC

Move To Deepen Acrimony Between NDA & Opponents

Kumar Rakesh & Ambika Pandit | TNN

RS issued a similar bulletin on behalf of chairman C P Radhakrishnan. Though the bulletin did not specify the ground for rejection, officials said it is a common practice

New Delhi: Lok Sabha speaker and Rajya Sabha chairman have rejected the opposition's notice for a motion for the removal of chief election commissioner **Gyanesh Kumar**, a move bound to deepen acrimony between the governing NDA and its opponents amid their campaign blitzkrieg for five assembly polls.

As many as 130 LS and 63 RS members — more than required under rules — from opposition parties had filed the notice on March 13 in their respective Houses, seeking Kumar's ouster for his alleged partisan and discriminatory conduct, especially in the SIR drive.

An LS bulletin said, "After due consideration of the notice of motion and a careful and objective assessment of all relevant aspects and issues involved therein, the speaker (Om Birla) in exercise of powers vested to him under section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, has refused to admit the said notice of motion."

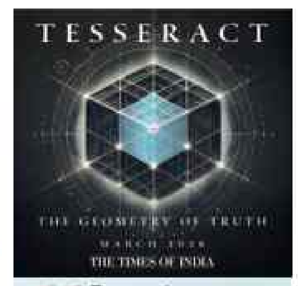
RS issued a similar bulletin on behalf of chairman C P Radhakrishnan. Though the bulletin did not specify the ground for rejection, officials said it is a common practice.

The notice, signed by opposition INDIA bloc members and some other BJP rivals such as AAP had the requisite support — at least 100 LS and 50 RS MPs.

As Parliament is set to meet for three days from April 16 to take up bills on implementing women's reservation in LS and state assemblies from the 2029 general polls, the rejection of the opposition's move against the CEC is expected to trigger a fresh political clash.

While Congress's Jairam Ramesh in a cryptic post said, "We know what happened to the last RS chairman who accepted a petition moved by opposition MPs", TMC's Derek O' Brien said, "Ah! I told you so. Notice to remove CEC 'Vanish Kumar' by RS MPs rejected. Reason? No reason given. BJP keep mocking our great Parliament."

After Congress had led a move to file a notice for Birla's removal, which was admitted and defeated by voice vote in LS, TMC was believed to have nudged the main opposition party to join it in making a similar move against Kumar.



"Tesseract was a beautiful and thought-provoking performance that began with geometry and culminated in spirituality. It traced the course of human history through the lens of journalism and portrayed, through dance, the journey of mankind guided by an inner quest for truth.
While phenomenal truth may be found in newspapers, spiritual or ultimate truth is an intuitive understanding, best expressed through art, music, and dance. It reveals itself in the silence between two musical notes or between two utterances of the sacred syllable Om.
Meera Jain, the driving force behind this unforgettable performance, has brilliantly illustrated the journey of humanity through a seamless blend of dance, drama, and multimedia effects.

— Amla Ruia
CHAIRMAN, AAKAR CHARITABLE TRUST

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001)
Corporate identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in Mobile No. 96461-55525

Open E-Tender Enq. No. 722/P-3/EMP-W-13257 **dated** 02.04.2026

Dy.Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. ID: 2026_POWER_165195_1 for Re-babbiting and machining of turbine bearing no. 1, 5 and fitting and machining of new bearing liner in bearing no.2. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 02.04.2026/05.00 PM onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

RTP-37/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2026-27/10201

NISM National Institute of Securities Markets A Capacity Building Initiative of SEBI

Procurement of 58 Desktops with Monitors and MS Office 2024 for NISM

NISM intends to procure 58 Desktops with Monitors and MS Office 2024. Suppliers may download the Expression of Interest (EOI) from the Live Tenders section of the Website **(https://www.tenderwizard.com/NISM)** for further details.

The last date of submission of EOI is April 22, 2026

For details, visit website: **https://www.nism.ac.in/tenders/**

1001/8/2627

The Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd.

(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
(An ISO: 9001:2008 certified Govt. Company)
Industrial Estate, Madhupatna, CUTTACK - 753 010, Odisha
Tel No. : 0671-2341204, 2342816 Fax : 0671-2341875 / 2342561
e-mail : osicltd@gmail.com, osicltd@rediffmail.com, Website : osicltd.in

TENDER CALL NOTICE

Ref No. 701/OSIC/MKT Date: 04.04.2026

The Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (OSIC Ltd.), A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking, Industrial Estate, Madhupatna, Cuttack-753 010, Odisha invites Tenders from the reputed authorized agency of the OEM / OEM under two bid system i.e., Technical Bid & Price Bid for "Procurement, supply & installation of 1023 nos. of Sanitary Napkin Incinerator and Vending machine in different Schools of 26 Blocks under Mayurbhanj District" in Online mode.

Date of Commencement of Tender	Last Date & Time of submission of Tender	Date & Time for online opening of Technical Bid	Cost of Tender Paper (Non-refundable/ not transferable)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)
06.04.2026 12.30 PM	27.04.2026 12.30 PM	27.04.2026 2.30 PM	(Rs.10,000/-)	Rs.3.00 Lakhs

The tender notice may be downloaded from **http://tendersorissa.gov.in./website:www.osicltd.in** and the tender document can be downloaded **http://tendersorissa.gov.in.** The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **http://tendersorissa.gov.in/ www.osicltd.in.** Any corrigendum/addendum / information relating to this NIT will be uploaded in above websites only which will not be published in Newspapers.

Sd/-
MANAGER (MKT)
OIPR-1001/1450/1/26-27/0002

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
MALKAJGIRI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
O/o The Superintending Engineer (Projects), MMC, HMDA Building, 1st Floor, Tarnaka, Hyderabad.

Tender Notice No.01/SE(Projects)/MMC/2026-27, Dt:07.04.2026

Item No. 1, **Name of Work:** Construction of RK Puram ROB Deposit works under Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC)/Turnkey Basis. **Estimate Amount:** Rs. 26.18 Crores. **Total:** Rs. 26.18 Crores.

Sl. No.	Event	Date and Time
1	Start date	07-04-2026 from 04.00 PM
2	Pre Bid Meeting	13-04-2026 at 03.00 PM. **Location:** O/o Chief Engineer (Projects), MMC 1st Floor, HMDA Complex, Tarnaka, Hyderabad
3	Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids	16-04-2026 upto 03.00 PM
4	Opening of Technical bid	16-04-2026 after 04.00 PM
5	Opening of Price bid	17-04-2026 after 04.00 PM

Note: The Bidders are advised to visit **www.tender.telangana.gov.in** to download Bid Document and EPC project Tender Drawings. Any Queries can be addressed to **seprojectsmmc@gmail.com**. **Address of the officer concerned:** Sri P.V. Krishna Rao, SE(Projects), 9515074641, O/o the Superintending Engineer (Projects), MMC, 1st Floor, HMDA Complex, Tarnaka, Hyderabad. Further details can be seen at 'e' Procurement **https://tender.telangana.gov.in.**

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Projects) MMC

R.O. No.: 188-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board, Pune

Plot No. R-7, Market Yard, Gultekadi, Pune-411037
Tel No. : 020-24528100/ 24528200
Email : domsdo@msamb.com Website : www.msamb.com

e-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender for Selection of Agency for Public Relation, Digital Support, Branding and Promotion of Agriculture, Horticulture and Processed agri-food products in Maharashtra

Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board (MSAMB) invites proposals from reputed, experienced and financially sound Branding, Marketing, Promotion and Public Relations Agencies for providing end-to-end branding, promotion and public relations management support to MSAMB and its nominated Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Value Chain Operators (VCOs) engaged in agriculture, horticulture (fresh produce) and processed agri-food products in Maharashtra. For more details please visit www.msamb.com and https://mahatenders.gov.in

Managing Director

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता,
सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, संभाग प्रथम –जोधपुर

क्रमांक- RajKaj Ref No.: 21351971 दिनांक: 01.04.2026

अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना संख्या 01/पीएमजीएसवाई /2026–27

NIB No.PWD2627A0001

राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना–चतुर्थ वर्ष 2026–27 बैच–प्रथम के अन्तर्गत स्वीकृत विभिन्न सड़क निर्माण के कार्य के निम्नलिखित कार्यों मय पांच साल की मरम्मत के लिए 2 पैकेज हेतु उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान में पंजीकृत संवेदकों एवं राज्य सरकार / केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों / केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग /डाक एवम् दूर संचार विभाग / रेल्वे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के उपयुक्त श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया से ऑन लाईन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विवरण वेब साईट https://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in व https://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in व https://pmgsytendersraj.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। पैकेजवाईज यू.बी.एन. निम्नानुसार है।

1. PWD2627WLOB00001	2. PWD2627WLOB00002

इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेब साईट https://pmgsytendersraj.gov.in पर रजिस्टर्ड होना आवश्यक है।

ई-साईन
(एन.सी. शर्मा)
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता,
सा.नि.वि. संभाग प्रथम, जोधपुर

DIPR/C/6414/2026

Government of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation And Ground Water Development Division, Ballari

IFT No. EE/MI & GWDD/Bly/AE-2/2025-26/2547
Date : 31.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (KW-3)

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Division Ballari invited the tender for the work under **Head of Account 4702-Plan-LIS(CMIDP)** Siruguppa taluk 04 works in **Two Cover System. Minimum Estimated amount put to tender is Rs.51.29 lakhs Maximum Estimated amount put to tender is Rs.95.21 lakhs** the tenderers should download and submit the tenders from **date : 01.04.2026 to 09.04.2026 upto 17.30 hours. Date & Time of opening Technical Bid is on 13.04.2026 at 11.00 hours. Opening of Financial Bid is on 15.04.2026 at 11.00 hours**. Any other information should get by login the website **"KPPP"** website http:// kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
M.I. & G.W.D. Division, Ballari.

DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/23

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

No. DYCE/GSU/GWL/Tender/0826 Date: 02.04.2026

E-Tender Notice

Deputy Chief Engineer (GSU), N.C. Railway, Gwalior for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open online E-Tenders (Two packet System) for the following work:

E-tender No.: DYCEGSUGWL0826, **Description of work:** "Construction of 02 Lane ROB (End to End including Approaches) in lieu of LC No. 349 at KM 1087/8-9, LC No. 394 at Km. 1182/1-3 and LC No.434 at Km. 1238/2 16.70 in between Bina - Dholpur section of North Central Railway."

Approx. Cost : ₹ 162.68 Crore | **Date of closing Tender :** 28.04.2026

Date of completion/period from issue acceptance letter : 18 Months

Note:- 1- Tender can be submitted online up to 11:00 hrs. on 28.04.2026. **2-** For Full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railway Website **www.ireps.gov.in**. **744/26 (MG)**

North central railways | @CPRONCR | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

NORTHERN POWER DISTIRBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
Corporate Identity Number : U40109TG2000SGC034119

TENDER NOTICE

TGNPDCL is intends to Purchase the Materials through e-Procurement platform from the Manufacturers. Specification No.: **CE/P&MM/(STN-01 to STN-50/2026-27 and OT-01 to OT-25/2026-27). Name of the Material :** Various Materials. Bid Security @2% on Ex-Works. Downloading of Tenders through On-Line e-Procurement starts from 08.04.2026 at 11.00AM. For further details visit www.tender.telangana.gov.in and www.tgnpdcl.com. For obtaining Digital Key visit www.tsts.telangana.gov.in.

Ph: 9490610271. Mail: cgmpmm@tgnpdcl.com. Sd/-. CHIEF ENGINEER (P&MM)

DIPR.NO. 11-PP/CL/AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27, Dt: 06.04.2026

1001/6/2627

The Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd.

(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
(An ISO:9001:2008 certified Govt. Company)
Industrial Estate, Madhupatna, CUTTACK -753 010, Odisha
Tel No.: 0671-2341204, 2342816 Fax: 0671-2341875/2342561
e-mail: osicltd@gmail.com, osicltd@rediffmail.com, website: osicltd.in

TENDER CALL NOTICE

Ref no.659/OSIC/MKT Date: 31.03.2026

The Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (OSIC Ltd.), A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking, Industrial Estate, Madhupatna, Cuttack 753 010, Odisha invites Tenders from the reputed authorized agency of the OEM / OEM under two bid system i.e., Technical Bid & Price Bid for "supply and installation of CCTV in 216 SSD Hostels run by ST & SC Development Department in Mayurbhanj District" in Online mode.

Date of Commencement of Tender	Last Date & Time of submission of Tender	Date & Time for online opening of Technical Bid	Cost of Tender Paper (Non-refundable/ not transferable)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)
31.03.2026 05.00 PM	20.04.2026 05.00 PM	21.04.2026 12.30 PM	(Rs.10,000/-)	Rs.4.00 Lakhs

The tender notice may be downloaded from **http://tendersorissa.gov.in./** website: **www.osicltd.in** and the tender document can be downloaded **http://tendersorissa.gov.in**. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **http://tendersorissa.gov.in/ www.osicltd.in.** Any corrigendum/ addendum / information relating to this NIT will be uploaded in above websites only which will not be published in Newspapers.

Sd/-
MANAGER (MKT)
OIPR-1001/1450/1/26-27/0001

UNIVERSITY OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES, BAGALKOT
Office of the Estate Officer, Udyanagiri, Near Simikeri By-Pass, Bagalkot -587104

No: SPO/EO/UHSB/TN-218/2026-27 Date: 06-04-2026

RETENDER NOTIFICATION

The University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot is inviting retender for the Establishment of Common Incubation Centre for processing of fruits, vegetables at : COH, Bidar (including of Construction Works) under KKRDB project for the use of COH, Bidar. The interested suppliers are requested to participate in the tender online through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal. For more details, please contact Ph.No: 08354-230258 and visit the link https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in for detailed specification, conditions and schedule of events and notification.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1	Last date and time for tender queries/ clarification.	16-04-2026	@	14.00 Hrs
2	Pre bid meeting	17-04-2026	@	11.00 Hrs
3	Last date and time for receipt of tenders.	06-05-2026	@	16.00 Hrs
4	Date and time for opening of Technical Bid	08-05-2026	@	11.00 Hrs
5	Date and time for opening of Financial Bid (if possible)	12-05-2026	@	12.00 Hrs

All bidders shall get updated with corrigendum / addendum received from time to time during the entire tender process by visiting KPP portal.

Sd-ESTATE OFFICER
UHS, BAGALKOT

DIPR/BGK/RO-NO-02/KSMCA/2026-27

NORTH WESTERN KARNATAKA ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Central Offices, Hubballi.

No. : Short Term Tender Notification No. 01/2026-27
Date : 06-04-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP)

Tenders are invited from the interested bidders for supply of the materials as shown below.

Sl. No.	Description of the Tender	Tender Value (Approx.)
01	Automotive Lubricants, Coolant & Adblue (Liquid Urea) for BS-VI TATA Vehicles (Short Term Tender).	Rs. 438 Lakh
02	Clutch & Clutch Parts.	Rs. 342 Lakh
03	Radiator Assembly and Radiator Parts.	Rs. 177 Lakh
04	Bus Seat Assemblies.	Rs. 165 Lakh
05	Automotive Lubricants & Coolant for BS-VI Leyland Vehicles.	Rs. 86 Lakh
06	LED Roof Lamp Assemblies.	Rs. 81 Lakh
07	Curing Bags and Curing Envelopes.	Rs. 56 Lakh

Last Date and Time for Submission of Bids : For the Tenders at Sl. No. 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 is 21-04-2026 & for the Tenders at Sl. No. 2 and 3 it is 21-05-2026 till 17.30 Hrs.

For details visit Website : http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Or Contact Mobile Phone No. 70220 09113.

Sd/- Controller of Stores & Purchases,
(Tender Inviting Authority).

DIPR/Dharwad/21/Manipal/2026-27

Tumakuru City Corporation, Tumakuru

Website: www.tumakurucity.mrc.gov.in
Phone No:2278480, Fax: 2275106 e-mail : itstaff_ulb_tumkur@yahoo.com Grievance: 0816-2272200, 2271200

No:TCC/Engineer Section/ele&Ws/Tender/CR/02/2025-26
DATED: 06.04.2026

Tender Notification

The Commissioner, Tumakuru City Corporation, Tumakuru invites tenders as per the KTPP act 1999-2000 through KPPP portal for Tumakuru City Corporation, for 01 Electrical work under genaral fund 2025-26. For more information go to website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/ and contact technical section in the office hours.

Contractors can download and submit the tenders through e-Procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/ Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Processing Fee shall also be paid electronically.

Scheduled calendar of events and other information are as follows:

1. Date of Queries of Tenders : 18-04-2026 at 5.00 pm. 2. Last Date for Submission of Tenders : 21-04-2026 at 5.00 pm. 3. Date of Opening of Tenders (Technical Bids). : 22-04-2026 at 5.15 pm

Postponement of calendar of events (if any) is only through e-Procurement portal and will not be published in newspapers.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Tumakur City Corporation Tumakuru

DIPR/TUM/11/KSMCA/2026-27

11001/3/2627

ODISHA STATE BUREAU OF TEXTBOOK PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION
(Department of Higher Education, Govt of Odisha)
A-11, Sukavihar, Bhubaneswar, Phone (0674) 2541162
website: www.textbookbureau.odisha.gov.in

TENDER CALL NOTICE

No- 284 dtd. 06.04.2026

Sealed tenders are invited from the paper Manufacturing Industries/Authorised Distributors having ISO/ BIS /EPM certificate for the procurement of following items.

	Items	Tentative requirement
1	70 G.S.M. S. S Maplitho paper both in sheet/reel and brightness 90%	800 M. T
2	130 G.S.M Art Paper in sheet	20 M. T
3	170 G.S.M Art Paper in sheet	20 M. T
4	220 G.S.M Art Paper in sheet	20 M. T
5	300 G.S.M Art paper in sheet	20 M. T

The above quantity mentioned against each of paper is approximate only and can be reduced or enhanced subsequently depending upon the actual requirement. Details of the tender with specifications, prescribed form for submission of rates etc. can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hour on payment of Rs. 10,000/- + 18% GST (non-refundable) thereon from the date of publication of tender notice upto 29.4.2026. The last date of receipt of tenders has been fixed on **30.4.2026** upto **1 P.M.** which shall be opened (i.e., except price bid) at **3.00 P.M.** on the same date i.e., **30.4.2026** in the presence of tenderers or their authorised representative. On such date of opening of tenders, the verification of all the Tender documents (Technical Profile) shall be undertaken in the presence of the tenderers or their authorised representatives with respect to the "Original/Notary attested" certificates. The tender applications of such bidders who fail to produce the Original/ Notary attested documents on such date as specified, may be rejected without any further communication made thereof. The price bid of the successful bidders shall be opened on a subsequent date, which will be informed later on. The Technical profile and price bid duly sealed in separate covers should be submitted together in another sealed cover super-scribed **"TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF PRINTING PAPER"** and addressed to the Director, Odisha State Bureau of Text Book Preparation and Production, Bhubaneswar on or before dt. **30.4.2026 by 1.00 P.M.** in the Office of the Director, Odisha State Bureau of Text Book Preparation and Production, Bhubaneswar.

The tender paper can also be downloaded from the website : **www.textbookbureau.odisha.gov.in** and in that case the tenderer shall deposit the cost of tender paper i.e. Rs. 10,000/- + 18% GST (non-refundable) in shape of Bank draft payable at Bhubaneswar in favour of Odisha State Bureau of Text Book Preparation and Production along with the tender paper.

The authority of the Bureau reserves the right to reject or cancel the tender or any part thereof without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- **Director**
Odisha State Bureau of Textbook Preparation and Production, Bhubaneswar

OIPR - 11001/11017/1/26-27/0001

32001/20/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
EASTERN CIRCLE-I, CANTONMENT ROAD, CUTTACK
Email id :- seeccuttack@gmail.com

'e' Procurement Notice No.ACE, EC-I/11 of 2025-26

1. Nature of work : Canal Lining Works
2. Total no. of works : 4 Nos.
3. Tender Amount : Varies from Rs.250.00 Lakh to Rs.251.00 Lakh (Approx.)
4. Tender paper cost : Rs.10,000/- per each tender (**Non refundable**)
5. EMD required : As mentioned in Section No.1 of DTCN (Clause No.6)
6. Class of contractor : 'B' & 'A'
7. Period of completion : 12 (Twelve) Calendar months.
8. Online for bidding : 16.04.2026 at 10.00 hrs. to 30.04.2026 up to 17.30 hrs.
9. Date & time of opening of Tender (Technical bid) : 02.05.2026 at 11.30 hrs.

Other terms and conditions can be seen from the Govt. website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
All corrigendum / cancellation of tender if any, will only be uploaded in the above web site.

Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer,
Eastern Circle-I, Cuttack
OIPR-32001/32370/1/26-27/0001

34001/7/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail: ceroads.bbsr@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. CE-Roads-I-24/2025-26

1. The Engineer-in-Chief (Civil), Roads-I, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover system through ONLINE MODE form eligible contractors for Roadwork as mentioned below:
2. Nature of work : Road works
3. No. of work : 3 Nos.
4. Tender Paper cost : Rs. 10,000.00
5. Class of Contractor : 'A' Class / Special Class / Super Class
6. Available of bid document the website : From 10.00 A.M. of 10.04.2026 to 5.30 PM of 28.04.2026
7. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.29.04.2026 at 11.30 A.M.
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tenderodisha.gov.in**. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-
Engineer-in-Chief (Civil), Roads-I, Odisha
OIPR-34001/34117/1/26-27/0002

34001/22/2627 Mail ID : sepwdbalangir@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
BALANGIR (R&B) CIRCLE: BALANGIR
e-Procurement Notice
BID IDENTIFICATION No: CCE(R&B) BGR/22/ 2025-26
Letter No- 1101 // Dtd. 31.03.2026

The Chief Construction Engineer, Balangir (R&B) Circle, Balangir on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in **ONLINE MODE** for the construction of works detailed in the table below from **"B" and "A" Contractors** registered with the State Governments and contractors of equivalent Grade/ Class registered with Central Government/ MES/ Railways for execution of Civil works. The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the bid.

1. Nature of Work : Building
2. No. of tender : Building work- 1 Nos.
3. Tender Cost : Rs. 10,000/-
4. Class of Contractor : **"B" and "A" Class**
5. Date & Time of sale & Receipt of Bids : From Dt. 08.04.2026, 06.55 P.M. to Dt. 23.04.2026 upto 05.00 P.M.
6. Date of opening Bid : Dt. 24.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
7. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **http://tendersorissa.gov.in.** All future corrigendum will be available on ONLINE MODE only.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Balangir (R&B) Circle, Balangir
OIPR - 34001/34131/1/26-27/0001

34001/26/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, CENTRAL (R&B) CIRCLE, BHUBANESWAR
Mail i.d seccbbsr@gmail.com
E-procurement Tender Call Notice No.28 of 2025-26
No. 1762 (Estg.) Bhubaneswar the 31st March-2026

The Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for one number Road work to be received in online bidding, double cover system for Improvement works as detailed in:**https://tendersodisha.gov.in.** The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from **5.00 P.M. of 10.04.2026 to 5.00 P.M of 24.04.2026**. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at **5.30 P.M of 24.04.2026** in the Office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle Bhubaneswar.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **www.tendersodisha.gov.in.**
Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd/-
Er.M.K.Mahananda
Chief Construction Engineer
Central (R&B) Circle, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-34001/34005/1/26-27/0001

TOGETHER HEALTH
WORLD HEALTH DAY 2026
READER ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Pulse on Prevention

Preventive healthcare is no longer seen as a luxury, but as a strategic investment—one that safeguards longevity, boosts productivity, and enhances quality of life. Health experts outline its many dimensions

ISTOCK

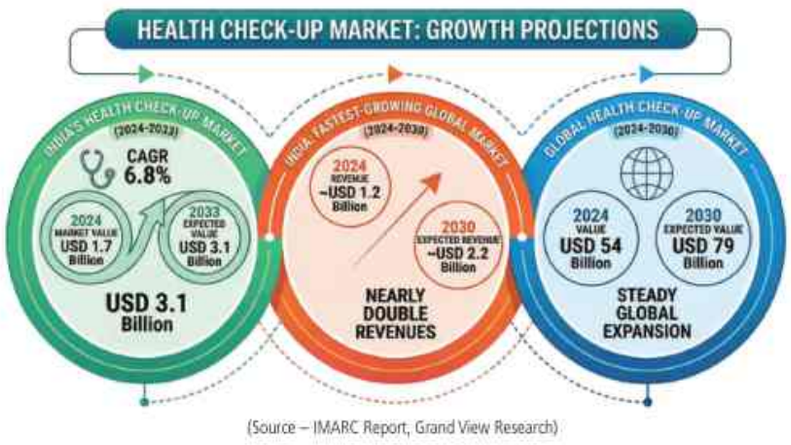
PriyaC.Nair
@timesofindia.com

The new health mantra of young, urban India is 'Stay ahead of Sickness,' where well-being is no longer a luxury but a necessity that is changing habits, mindsets, and outcomes. "Preventive healthcare is increasingly seen as a necessity, though in urban India it still carries a 'premium lifestyle' label. This change is driven by increasing health awareness, rising lifestyle diseases, higher disposable income, and digital health content," says Dr Priya SP Patil, consultant – obstetrician and gynaecologist, laparoscopic surgeon, infertility specialist, Altius Hospital.

The growing prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiac conditions is prompting people to prioritise early detection and ongoing monitoring. "Urban citizens are shifting from episodic, illness-driven care to continuous health management. Regular diagnosis, early screening, and personalised wellness interventions are now adopted to prevent disease and maintain health, making preventive care both a lifestyle choice and a sign of informed healthcare behaviour," explains Dr Shravan Subramanyam, managing director, BPL Medical Technologies. Also, there is a growing awareness that delayed treatment is more costly, both financially and in terms of health outcomes, than timely prevention.

TRENDS IN HEALTH CHECK

Health experts say that there is a remarkable shift in people's mindset as many take routine health check-ups far more seriously now than they did a few years ago. As Subramanyam explains, "A recent hospital-led survey indicates that nearly 70per cent of respondents have undergone a health check-up in the past year, compared to earlier community-based studies, which found that only 25–30per cent of adults had ever accessed preventive screening. This demonstrates meaningful progress, even as it highlights the gap that still exists."



(Source – IMARC Report, Grand View Research)

Giving details on the age-related health-check patterns, Patil adds, "There is a definite rise in routine health check-ups, especially among the 25–45 age group. Earlier, check-ups were mostly symptom-driven or done after 40. There is also a growing trend of corporate health packages, fertility assessments in younger women, and increased awareness about hormonal and metabolic health."

DIAGNOSTICS TAKE THE LEAD

At the heart of this transformation is the rapid evolution of diagnostics. "Modern diagnostics is shifting healthcare from treatment-centric to prediction and prevention-led. With advancements in high-sensitivity assays, molecular diagnostics, and integrated reporting, we can now detect disease risks at a pre-clinical stage. This enables clinicians to intervene earlier, often altering disease trajectories and improving outcomes," says Dr Bikash Kumar Chaudhury, CEO and senior VP, Happiest Diagnostics. Also, there is a rise in asymptomatic screening. "Early-stage detection is particularly important in oncology, cardiometabolic conditions, and endocrine disorders. It allows timely and often less invasive interventions. The result is improved prognosis, reduced morbidity, and a significantly better quality of life," adds Kumar.

Artificial intelligence is further strengthening this shift. AI-based diagnostic systems can accurately predict conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, COPD, and cancer at early or pre-clinical stages, enabling preventive interventions and personalised monitoring. According to Subramanyam, this aligns with the P4 medicine framework—predictive, preventive, personalised, and participatory—which redefines diagnostics as a continuous health management tool rather than a one-time clinical event.

SCREEN WISELY, NOT WIDELY

However, experts caution that more testing does not always mean better care. "We increasingly see people opting for random blood tests or large packages without any clinical indication. Similarly, unnecessary imaging, such as frequent full-body scans or scans done without symptoms, can lead to incidental findings that create anxiety and trigger further unnecessary investigations. Preventive healthcare should be guided, not excessive. It is always best to consult a doctor and choose tests that are relevant to your age, risk factors, and medical history, rather than following generic or trend-driven packages," recommends Patil.

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Indiranagar 25214746/47/48
Jayanagar 26533055/56/57
Koramangala 25634411/12/13
Bannerghatta Road 26486033/34
Sadashivanagar 23618037/38/39
Vijayanagar 23180011/12 9900044214
Kammanahalli 25455078/79
Marathalli 28441062/63
Centers at Hyderabad, Mangaluru and Mysuru
Email - sathya@shreyahearingclinic.com • www.shreyahearingclinic.com

This World Health Day,
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HAPPIEST DIAGNOSTICS
a unit of HAPPIEST HEALTH
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*Processed at NABL Accredited Laboratory (for tests under accredited scope)
PROBE
PRECISION TESTING
PREDICT
SMART REPORTS
PREVENT
HEALTH INSIGHTS
Home Sample Collection 874 8888 874
Essential Health Checkup (50 Parameters) ₹1,860 ₹399
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Core Health Checkup (73 Parameters) ₹4,360 ₹999 Most popular
CBC, FBS, HbA1C, Lipid Profile, Kidney Function Test, Thyroid Function Test, Urine Routine, Liver function Test
Pro Health Checkup (81 Parameters) ₹8,430 ₹1,799
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Valid till 30th April
Located at: Banasawadi | Banashankari | Bellandur | Electronic City | HSR Layout | Indiranagar | JP Nagar | Jayanagar
Kanakapura Road | Malleshwaram | Nagarbhavi | Nandini Layout | RR Nagar | RT Nagar | Sanjay Nagar | Vijayanagar | Yelahanka

CHANDAULI: SHAPING A NEW IDENTITY

A PATH GUIDED BY PURPOSE

Chandauli's progress under the Aspirational Districts Programme is driven by a holistic, multi-sector approach focused on inclusive growth and measurable development outcomes.

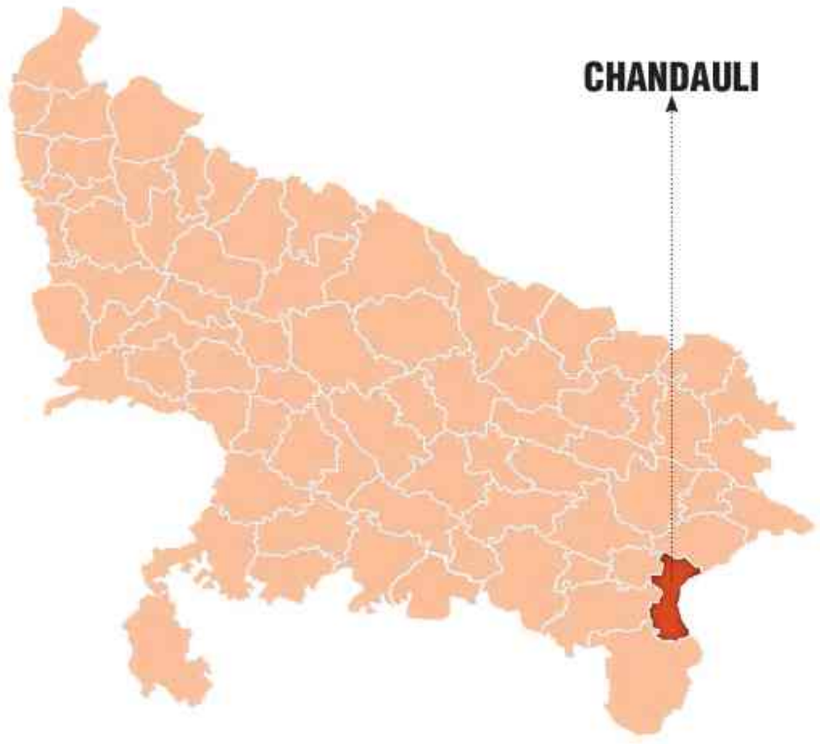
Score of Key Performance Indicators across core sectors:

Basic Infrastructure
SCORE
100
(September 2025)

Health & Nutrition
SCORE
93.2
(September 2025)

Education
SCORE
86.2
(September 2025)

Chandauli is steadily emerging as a symbol of focused governance and inclusive growth under the Aspirational Districts Programme. Its developmental trajectory since 2018 is a testament to the power of administrative focus. Targeted interventions across health, education, infrastructure and livelihoods have accelerated the district's development trajectory



ODOP CRAFTS & INDUSTRIES OF CHANDAULI

- **Focus products:** The One District One Product (ODOP) for Chandauli is zari-zardozi (intricate embroidery) and Black Rice (nutritious agricultural produce). These products were selected to promote local craftsmanship and agriculture, fostering economic growth and boosting local artisans and farmers under the state's initiative
- **Rice Bowl of UP:** Chandauli is known as the 'Rice Bowl of Uttar Pradesh,' with strong presence of rice mills and agro-processing units
- **Agro-based industrial strength:** ODOP promotes value addition in paddy through modern milling, packaging, and supply chain improvements
- **Employment generation:** Rice mills, storage units, and transport-linked activities create local jobs, especially in rural and semi-urban areas
- **Support to farmers:** Better market linkages, storage, and processing facilities help farmers get improved returns for produce
- **MSME development:** Encourages small and medium enterprises in food processing, packaging, and agro-logistics
- **Skill development & training:** Local youth are trained in food processing technology, machine operations, and quality control
- **Export potential:** Processed rice and related products from the district have growing domestic and international market demand
- **Infrastructure push:** Development of warehouses, cold chains, and transport connectivity supports ODOP industry growth
- **Women participation:** Self-help groups are involved in packaging, grading, and small-scale processing activities
- **Branding & market promotion:** Efforts are ongoing to brand Chandauli rice products for wider recognition

PICS: DIPR, UP GOVT

Black Rice

Zari-Zardozi

LAKHPATI DIDI

Community Resource Persons (CRPs) 498

Potential Lakhpati Didis (PLDs) 35,272

Digital Aajeevika Register (DARs) 1,10,509

CONNECTIVITY

ROAD: Expressways: The district is linked through the under-construction 8-lane Varanasi-Kolkata Greenfield Expressway, expected to cut travel time to Kolkata to six hours. It is also well-connected by national highways, improving access to neighbouring states.

RAIL: Mughalsarai Junction (DDU Junction): Located approx 15 km from the district headquarters, this is one of India's busiest railway stations and a crucial, massive freight yard, connecting the district to major Indian cities

Chandauli Majhwar Railway Station (CDMR): Directly serves the town with connections to major destinations

EDUCATION REFORMS ARE YIELDING POSITIVE RESULTS

Chandauli has achieved perfect scores across most infrastructure benchmarks, with human resource compliance nearing completion as of February 2026

Baba Kinaram Autonomous State Medical College

Baba Kinaram Autonomous State Medical College is a state-run medical college. Affiliated to Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University, Lucknow, and approved by the National Medical Commission, the college aims at strengthening healthcare services and medical education in the region.

UNIVERSAL SUCCESS MILESTONES 100% ACHIEVEMENT

100% Functional Infrastructure

100% Secondary Level Electrification

100% On-Time Textbook Delivery

AI GENERATED INFOGRAPHIC

REACHING 100% INFRASTRUCTURE SATURATION

By February 2026, Chandauli has reached a 100% achievement rate across critical 'Basic Infrastructure' indicators, signaling a total transformation

DIGITAL & SERVICE CONNECTIVITY

100% Internet Connectivity

100% Common Service Centre Coverage

AI GENERATED INFOGRAPHIC

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE & HOUSING

100% Road Access & Completion

100% Delivery of Permanent Housing

WHERE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE MEETS MODERN TOURISM

Rajdari Waterfall

- The Rajdari Waterfall is located in the Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary was originally established to conserve Asiatic lions and is now home to diverse animal and bird species. Along with its wildlife, the sanctuary attracts visitors with the crystal-clear cascading waters of Rajdari, flowing over rocky terrain to create a breathtaking view. The serene and scenic surroundings add a mystical charm to the experience. It is a popular day-trip destination with eateries available, though accommodation facilities are not present
- Latif-Shah Dam, completed in 1921, is among the oldest dams in India. Built on the Karmanasa River, its reservoir primarily supports irrigation and supplies water for human consumption
- Latif Shah Tomb belongs to a sufi saint Hazrat Latif Shah Beer Rahmatullah and

Devdari Waterfall

is located at a distance of 3 km from Chakia

- Located in the Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary, the Devdari Waterfall is a major natural attractions. Though originally created to conserve Asiatic lions, the sanctuary today hosts diverse wildlife and bird species. The clear cascading waters, rocky terrain, and serene surroundings create a mystical experience. It is a popular destination for day trips, offering several eateries for visitors.
- The excellently-preserved ruins have a meditative air around them and amid them stands an ancient Bodhi Vriksh (tree)
- The huge World Peace Bell in Shravasti, established with Japan's help, is said to convey the message of humanity through its toll

ACHIEVING 100% IN HEALTH AND NUTRITION

As of December 2025-February 2026, Chandauli District has reached remarkable milestones under the Transformation of Aspirational Districts programme. The district has achieved a 100% success rate across all major tracked indicators for maternal care, child wellness, and healthcare infrastructure

MATERNAL & CHILD WELLNESS

AI GENERATED INFOGRAPHIC

100% Success in Early Neonatal Care

100% Total Immunisation Coverage

100% Severe Anaemia Treatment Rate

INFRASTRUCTURE & CLINICAL STANDARDS

100% Full Compliance with National Standards

100% TB Treatment Success

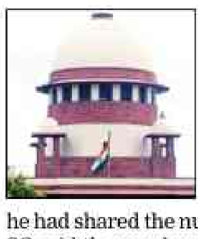
100% Outreach and Facility Functionality

READER ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

SC pillories Bengal CS, DGP on siege, slams secretariat politics

'CJI Intervention Prevented Untoward Malda Event Against Judicial Officers'

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com



'What is the problem with you that you don't even entertain urgent and repeated calls of the Cal HC chief justice (in connection with the attack on judicial officers)?'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday slammed West Bengal chief secretary Dushyant Nariala and DGP Siddh Nath Gupta for not responding to SOS calls from the Calcutta HC chief justice on April 1 seeking protection of judicial officers attacked and held hostage by a mob in Malda district.

A bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi asked the chief secretary, "What is the problem with you that you don't even entertain urgent and repeated calls of the Calcutta HC chief justice (in connection with the attack on judicial officers)?" The chief secretary denied getting calls and said he was busy in Delhi and that the calls might have been made between 2-4 pm when he was on a flight.

Justice Bagchi said, "Chief secretary, the phone calls were made in the evening after you landed in Calcutta. It would have been extremely useful for the chief justice and HC administration if you had been kind enough to share your mobile number with them."

The senior bureaucrat said he had shared the number, but SC said the number was mostly switched off. The chief secretary said his number was secure, but that did not wash with the bench either. "The security of the number is so high that the chief justice of Calcutta HC cannot access it. So, please lower yourself a bit so that ordinary minions like the HC CJ can access the chief secretary," Justice Bagchi said.

Nariala became apologetic, leading the bench to firmly tell him to tender his apology to the Calcutta HC CJ. "We are disappointed and pained that the chief secretary refuses to acknowledge the chief justice of the state. Only because of the failure of civil and police administration and both of you (CS and DGP), there was an attack on judicial officers," the bench said. "Both of you don't communicate either with the EC or the HC CJ and keep them in the dark. Because of this non-communication, it created so much disturbance," the bench said. "What kind of credibility has the West Bengal bureaucracy and police shown?" the bench asked.

"Why is it seen in the entire state that politics is played in the secretariat or in offices?... The incident happened at 3.30 pm. The HC CJ made repeated calls to the DGP who decided to meet him at 11.30 pm. Even the home secretary was unable to contact the chief secretary."

When senior advocate Jaideep Gupta attempted to praise the DM and SP saying they had done the firefighting, Justice Bagchi said, "They were merely watching. When the HC registry contacted the SP, he said: 'What can I do? Women are there? If you ask me, we will beat the women'. "Only because of the timely intervention of Chief Justice of India (Surya Kant) something very unfortunate or untoward was avoided."

SC asks NIA to take over Malda gherao probe

New Delhi: Shaken by the cry of a woman judicial officer, whose car was attacked and whose colleagues were gheraoed by a violent mob in Malda district's Kaliachak block office, the Supreme Court on Monday slammed West Bengal police's inaction and directed National Investigation Agency to immediately take over probe into the entire episode narrated in 12 FIRs and subject arrested accused to interrogation, **reports Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

Though the Election Commission had directed handing over of the probe into the attack and gherao of judicial officers deployed by the Supreme Court for scrutiny of claims and objections during carrying out of special intensive revision of electoral rolls, a bench of CJI Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi was told by additional solicitor general S V Raju that the state police is yet to hand over the case files to NIA.

Deletions after adjudication of cases stand at around 88.8 lakh

▸ Continued from page 1

If the tribunals are asked to adjudicate lakhs of appeals by April 15, it will not only become a crushing burden on the tribunals, but also create chaos," said a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi. In addition to the 60 lakh categorised as "doubtful", another 61.7 lakh names of people were taken off the roll during SIR after they were found to have passed away, shifted, registered at two places or who could not be traced.

The overall deletions after adjudication of cases stand at around 88.8 lakh, which is 11.6% of the electorate at the start of SIR. As per Section 23(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, the voter list for phase 2 will be frozen on April 9 (last day of nomination). The bench said 700-odd judicial officers deployed for the Bengal SIR have performed a miracle by completing adjudication of over 60 lakh claims.

Appearing for the Bengal govt and TMC supporters, advocate Shyam Divan said as many as seven lakh appeals have been filed and many more are going to be filed soon, and suggested that those appeals be decided by April 15 to enable inclusion in the final voter list.

The bench said it had exercised its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to deploy judicial officers to scrutinise claims and objections, given the trust deficit between the state govt and EC.

Air India CEO resigns amid mounting losses

Air India CEO **Campbell Wilson** has resigned amid mounting losses and a slower-than-expected turnaround of the airline the Tata Group took back in its fold over four years ago. Wilson, whose resignation was accepted by the airline board last week, will stay till a successor is found and is serving his notice period. And that is likely to happen once the final report into last June's AI 171 Ahmedabad crash is out, **reports Saurabh Sinha**.

Wilson had joined AI in July 2022 for a five-year term. The Tata Group had started looking for his successor a few months back. AI was not in the best of health after remaining a PSU since its nationalisation in 1953 till 2022, when it was finally sold to the Tatas, along with AI Express.

While supply chain disruptions caused by Covid led to older planes' makeovers getting delayed along with induction of newer ones, airspace restrictions meant longer routes and mounting expenses. Last month, IndiGo CEO Pieter Embers had also resigned. IndiGo has named his successor, who is expected to join by Aug. Air India, where the hunt for a new CEO began long before that at IndiGo, still awaits its new Maharaja.

COMING UP

TOI presents a round-up of forthcoming key events and birthdays of notable personalities. Scan the QR code to post your wishes

April 7

Ram Gopal Varma — Filmmaker known for Satya, Rangeela, and Company. RGVzoomin, rgvzoomin

Jeetendra — Veteran actor known for 70s-80s hits and dance style. jeetendra_kapoor

World Health Day

April 8

Allu Arjun — Telugu actor with pan-India appeal, known for Pushpa. alluarjun, alluarjunonline

Praveer Sinha — CEO & MD, Tata Power. sinha_praveer

Space Meet — Isro to host 3-day International Conference on Spacecraft Mission Operations in Bengaluru

April 9

Jaya Bachchan — Actor-politician, Rajya Sabha MP. BachchanJaya, jaya_bachchan_

Jairam Ramesh — Rajya Sabha MP, former Union environment minister. Jairam_Ramesh

Poll Day — Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, and bypolls in 4 states

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MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, GOVT. OF INDIA
2 DAYS GOVERNMENT CERTIFICATION ON
FOOD BUSINESS AND SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING
Course Duration 2 Days (ONLINE) Date: 11 & 12 April 2026 Time: 11:00 AM to 2:30 PM
Course Content: High-demand food business opportunities in Dehydration, Business Setup & Mandatory Licenses, Smart & Sustainable Packaging, Food Processing & Packaging Machinery, Export Documentation, Compliance (APEDA, USFDA, EU), Drafting & Documentation Business Agreements, Vendor & Buyer Contracts, Litigation & Regulatory Support, Pricing & Digital Sales – Product Positioning, Costing & Profit Analysis, Government Schemes & Financial Support – PMFME, PMEGP, NABARD, APEDA, Startup India & MSME Initiatives for Businesses and Startups.
Fees : Rs.3,540/- (Study material in soft copy shall be provided)
Coordinator: 9818676612, 9818528498, 9686564246
Government of India certificate will be awarded

Bizman's son held after car crash kills K'taka woman in Goa

Panaji: Karnataka native Diksha Parwadkar, 23, was killed and her colleague, D Arunkumar, 26, a Margao resident, was injured after the two-wheeler on which they were travelling was hit by a new Mini Cooper driven by Darius Myles Dias, 22, at Dona Paula here.

Darius, son of businessman Andrew Dias, has been arrested. The incident took place on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday. Dias, in his Mini Cooper, was proceeding from Dona Paula towards Bambolim, and he hit a two-wheeler from behind when an employee of the Taj Convention Centre crossed the road to proceed towards Bambolim. Parwadkar was working as an apprentice. She and Arunkumar were on their way home after work when the accident took place. Both work at the front office of Taj Convention Centre, Chodankar said.

After the accident, both were shifted to GMC for treatment, where Parwadkar passed away, whereas Arunkumar is undergoing treatment at the hospital.

An eyewitness said that a speeding car approached the Taj Convention Centre junction from where a two-wheeler was crossing the road, and both the rider and pillion rider were flung into the air and fell on the road. TNN

66-yr-old kills neighbour, 70, for affair with wife

Prayagraj: UP police arrested on Sunday 66-year-old Ramlal in Naini, south of Prayagraj, for killing 70-year-old Hazari Lal, his neighbour and a watchman, over an alleged extramarital relationship with his wife Anarkali, 65, for about eight years. He claimed that repeated warnings failed, leaving him distressed and prompting him to kill Hazari Lal.

Ramlal left home at 2 am on the intervening night of April 2 and 3, carrying an axe, police said. He entered Hazari Lal's house and struck him on the head with its blunt side. As the victim collapsed, he allegedly delivered multiple blows to the face and head, killing him on the spot, before returning home and hiding the weapon. Hazari Lal's son later filed a complaint against an unidentified person. CCTV footage & local intelligence led to tracing Ramlal. TNN

Japanese tourist harassed in Raj; 5 booked

Jaipur: A Japanese tourist was allegedly harassed sexually by five youths who stopped her on a secluded stretch near Jaigarh Fort in Amber area of Jaipur, police said on Monday.

The youths pushed the woman, held her hands and attempted to kiss her, cops said, citing the woman's complaint that has led to an FIR. No arrests have been made so far.

Cops said the alleged harassment occurred Sunday when the tourist, who arrived in Rajasthan a few days ago, went to visit Jaigarh Fort. She raised the alarm after being molested and ran towards a security guard stationed nearby.

MAULANA AZAD NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
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Bhopal-462003 (M.P.) INDIA
ADMISSION NOTICE
No/MANIT/Acad./2026/5068-1 Date: 06.04.2026
Applications are invited for following P.G. program categories, Admission Session 2026-27
- Full Time
  - I. M.Tech - Self-Financed , Sponsored
  - ii. MBA - Institute, Sponsored
  - iii. M.Sc. - Self Financed , Sponsored
  - iv. MA - Full Time (Regular)
- Part Time
  - I. M.Tech , ii. M.B.A, iii. M.C.A, iv. M.Sc.

For details visit Institute website www.manit.ac.in to fill application form visit http://online.manit.ac.in/ext/admission
The last date for receiving duly completed application form is 01-06-2026.
DIRECTOR

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport and Highways)
भर्ती सूचना / RECRUITMENT NOTICE
भारतीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण (भा.रा.रा.प्रा.) मानकीकरण, अनुसंधान एवं विकास (एसआरडी) और प्रौद्योगिकी प्रेरण (टीआई) में कार्य करने के लिए संविदा आधार पर निम्नलिखित पदों के लिए आवेदन आमंत्रित करता है:–
National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) invites applications for following positions **on contract basis** to work in Standardization, Research & Development (SRD) and Technology Induction (TI):-

Name of the post	No. of posts*
संयुक्त सलाहकार (तकनीकी)–एसआरडी सेल Joint Advisor (Technical) - SRD Cell	01
सहायक सलाहकार (तकनीकी)–प्रौद्योगिकी प्रेरण सेल Assistant Advisor (Technical) - Technology Induction Cell	01

*पदों की संख्या प्राधिकरण की आवश्यकता के अनुसार बढ़ाई या घटाई जा सकती है।
*Number of posts may increase / decrease as per requirement of the Authority.
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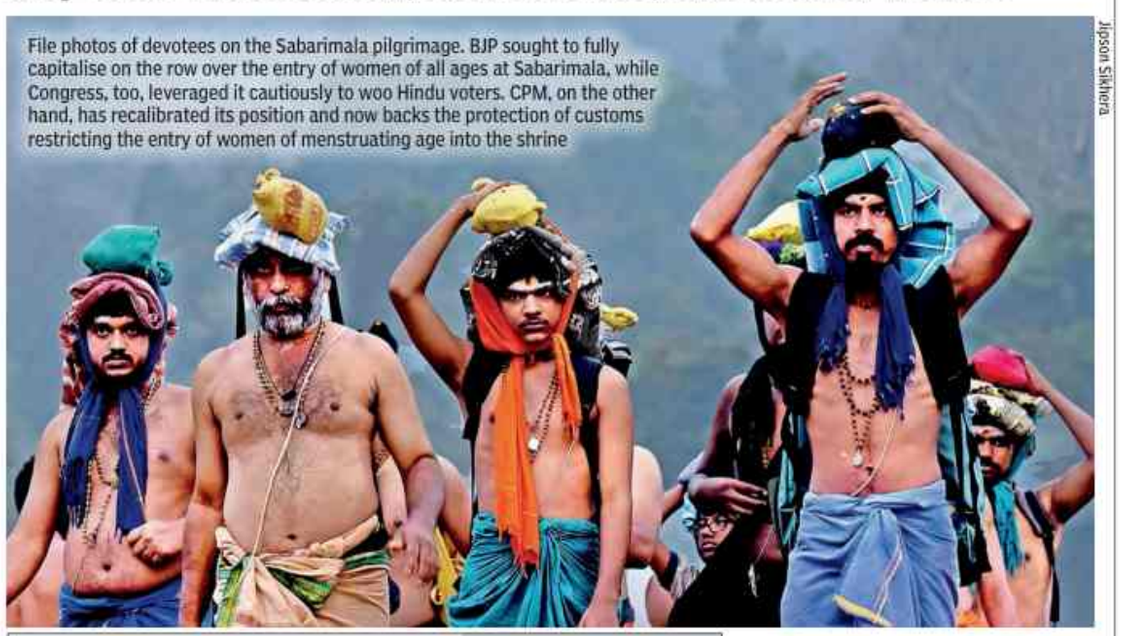
Leap Of Faith In God's Own Country

LDF and UDF to NDA, political blocs are increasingly relying on community identity, social blocs, and religion-based appeals to widen support — a striking shift in a state long shaped by class mobilisation, land reforms, and secular welfare

Preetu.Nair@timesofindia.com

Religion and caste are no longer operating at the margins of Kerala's politics. They are becoming central to electoral mobilisation in a state long defined by class struggles, land reforms, literacy, welfare and a broadly secular public culture shaped by both the Left and the Congress.

This shift is now visible across the political spectrum. Even without major electoral breakthroughs, BJP has altered the terms of political competition, pushing both the CPM-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) to engage more openly with religious identities, caste blocs and community anxieties. What was once treated as peripheral in Kerala's public life is now moving closer to the electoral mainstream.



File photos of devotees on the Sabarimala pilgrimage. BJP sought to fully capitalise on the row over the entry of women of all ages at Sabarimala, while Congress, too, leveraged it cautiously to woo Hindu voters. CPM, on the other hand, has recalibrated its position and now backs the protection of customs restricting the entry of women of menstruating age into the shrine

Jigson Sikhera

Identity Politics Gains Ground

"Not just religion, even caste has gained renewed salience for political parties, largely to mobilise votes," said political scientist G Gopa Kumar.

Studies done after the 2021 assembly and 2024 Lok Sabha elections indicate shifts among two key Hindu communities: the Ezhavas, traditionally seen as a strong support base of LDF, and Nairs, sections of whom appear to have moved towards BJP since 2018-19. According to a Lokniti-CSDS survey, the share of Ezhava voters going with LDF fell to around 49% in 2016 assembly polls from 64% in 2006, while CPM support among Nairs dropped sharply in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Much of this churn appears to have benefited BJP — the party's Ezhava vote share rose from 6% to 17% in the same period.

"It is time to admit that 'Hindutvaisation' has become a major force in Kerala and is now part of the political consciousness across parties. Even the LDF is not exempt," said political analyst Sunny Kapikad. "In Kerala, Hindutva is often framed as a cultural legacy, not just a religious identity."

A Three-Way Contest

The Dec 2025 local body elections underlined this trend, pointing to a more competitive three-cornered contest in the state. The BJP-led NDA expanded its footprint in key urban pockets — including a breakthrough in Thiruvananthapuram — while also making gains in scattered local bodies.

At the same time, Muslim and Christian voters appeared to consolidate behind UDF in several regions, highlighting a parallel religious polarisation in Kerala's electoral landscape.

"Political parties, across ideological divides, are ready to amplify demographic anxieties and identity-based claims for electoral gain," said sociologist Antony Palakkal. "Forms of communal polarisation that were once marginal are now becoming explicit and central to political debate in Kerala."

Left Recalibrates

The LDF's response has reflected this changing political terrain. In a significant shift, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's govt stepped up outreach to Hindu organisations. Through the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), it organised the Global Ayyappa Sangamam at Pamba in Sept 2025 to mark the board's 75th anniversary, projecting Sabarimala as a "divine, traditional and sustainable global pilgrimage centre".

CPM also engaged directly with influential Hindu community organisations such as the Nair Service Society (NSS), Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP Yogam), Kerala Pulaya Maha Sabha (KPMS) and the Malayaraya Mahasabha. Many of these groups had drifted towards the BJP and Congress after the Sabarimala temple-entry controversy.

Minority Rhetoric Sharpens

At the same time, LDF has sharpened its rhetoric around minority politics. CPM leader A K Balan's remark that Jamaat-e-Islami could influence the home department if the UDF came to office was widely seen as an attempt to stoke anxieties. IUML leader K M Shaji, in turn, accused CPM of deliberately fuelling Islamophobia, while UDF leaders alleged that the Left was resorting to communal rhetoric to deflect attention from governance issues.

The govt has also recalibrated its position on the Sabarimala women's entry issue, now backing the protection of traditional customs that restrict the entry of women of menstruating age, between 10 and 50 years.

The Sabarimala Flashpoint

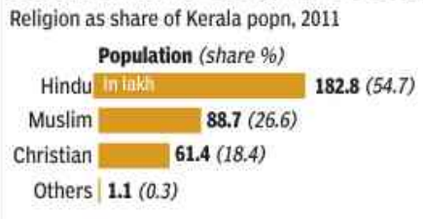
Yet, LDF's outreach has not been without complications. The alleged theft of more than 4.5kg of gold from Sabarimala temple, which surfaced in late 2025, handed both BJP and UDF an opportunity to attack the govt and try to consolidate Hindu sentiment. While BJP did so openly, the UDF responded more cautiously, mindful of its minority support base.

Even so, political analysts caution against assuming that a broad Hindu consolidation will automatically follow.

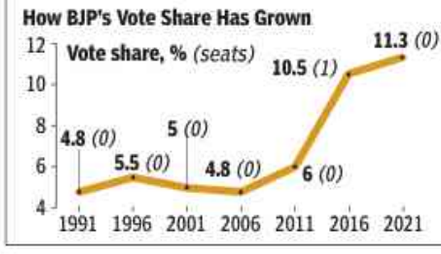
"All these efforts may just go in vain. The Hindu consolidation may not hold," said Gopa Kumar. "Nair votes are likely to split between BJP and Congress, while Ezhava votes could divide mainly between the Left and BJP, with a smaller share going to Congress. Yet, this churn is necessary, as the Left knows that even marginal gains among Hindu voters could prove crucial in the upcoming assembly elections."

COUNTING DENOMINATIONS

Religion as share of Kerala popn, 2011



How BJP's Vote Share Has Grown



- BJP's vote share has grown since 2016, but it has struggled to convert votes into seats
- Shifts among Ezhava and Nair voters since 2018-19 indicate churn in traditional party loyalties
- 2025 local body polls showed BJP gains, especially in urban pockets and some panchayats
- Muslim and Christian voters are seen as consolidating behind Cong-led UDF in several regions
- Sabarimala continues to shape political messaging and voter mobilisation

How 'ChriSanghi' crept into Kerala poll lexicon

Disney.Tom@timesofindia.com

Kammi, Conghi and Sanghi: these words are so deeply embedded in Kerala's political parlance that they are used liberally in everything from tea-shop debates to the battleground of social media comments. Their meanings are simple. A 'Kammi' is a blind follower of communism, just as a 'Conghi' is a Congress loyalist. 'Sanghi' refers to a follower of Sangh Parivar politics. In recent years, however, another term has carved out a place in this political lexicon: 'ChriSanghi', used to denote Christians in Kerala who align with BJP.

The term was born in mockery, as a way to criticise Christians for veering towards Hindutva. Over time, however, those within the "nationalist" movement have come to embrace it. Many who have formally joined the BJP or become fellow travellers now wear the label as a badge of identity.

Kevin Peter, state president of the Christian Association and Alliance for Social Action (CASA), a Christian organisation known for its pro-BJP stance, says that initially those called ChriSanghi laughed it off, claiming the tag simply meant they had "assembled" (sanghadikuka) for Christ.

"In the past, people used to hesitate to admit any association with the RSS or BJP. Now they have reached a point where they openly call themselves ChriSanghi — that is, Christian Sanghi. For me, and those like me, there is no hesitation in saying that I am a ChriSanghi who stands with the nationalist movement," he said.

The term ChriSanghi entered the mainstream in 2021 after a viral homily by Catholic priest Fr James Panavelil, who described the phenomenon as one driven by "hatred" rather than "love".

"Even as Sangh Parivar politics gained momentum across India, the attempt to root that ideology in Kerala has seen little electoral success. Hindutva politics essentially mixes religion with statecraft, which is a worrying sign," Panavelil said.

He warned that turning prayer into a political slogan was a dangerous trend. "The primary opponents of this ideology are Muslims, followed by Communists. The strategy is to mobilise Christians against the Muslim community by fostering communal friction. But that does not mean they (those who follow Hindutva politics) will not turn on Christians once they are finished with Muslims," he said.

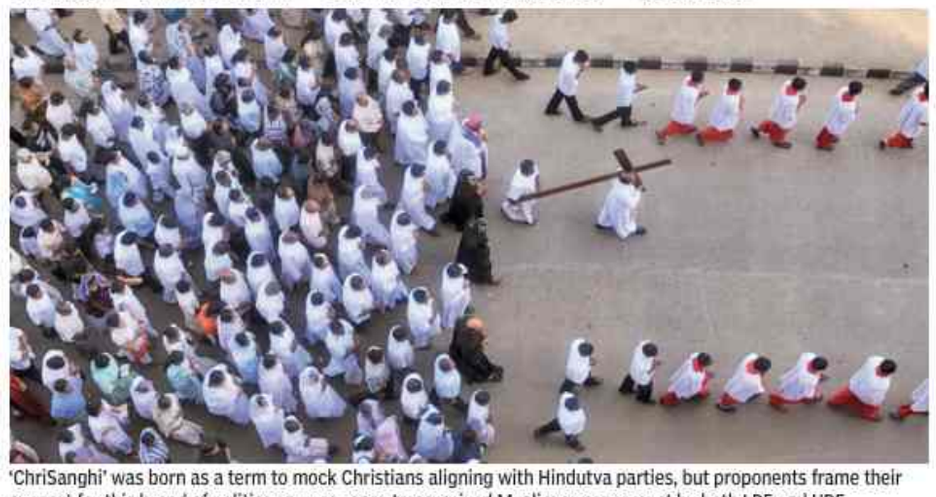
Kevin, however, argued that in Kerala, the Congress-led UDF and the CPM-led LDF are competing to prove who is better at appeasing conservatives within the Muslim community.

"So, it is clear that the Muslim community will control governance irrespective of which front forms the govt. We believe there should be at least a handful of BJP MLAs to question moves that would otherwise be passed unanimously," said Kevin, who alleged that both fronts were in league with organisations such as Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and the SDPI.

Fr Sabin Thoomullil of the Catholic Congress, the official community organisation of the Syro-Malabar Church, said a shift towards a third front could be seen as a natural response to the failure of both traditional political blocs to uplift the community. "The number of people thinking this way is gradually rising, even if the change is not drastic. So, when you ask who is making the Christian community think differently, the answer is simple: it is the very parties the community has traditionally supported," Fr Thoomullil said.

The victory of Suresh Gopi, the first BJP MP elected from Kerala, sent shockwaves through the state's political landscape. Weeks before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Gopi famously offered a golden crown to the Lourdes Metropolitan Cathedral in Thrissur, a constituency with a sizeable Christian population. Many believe the influence of ChriSanghis played a key role in securing his surprise victory.

Historically, BJP's success in Kerala has been limited. It has won only one assembly seat so far and currently has no representation in the House. If that trend is to change in the coming polls, ChriSanghis could play a pivotal role.



'ChriSanghi' was born as a term to mock Christians aligning with Hindutva parties, but proponents frame their support for this brand of politics as a response to perceived Muslim appeasement by both LDF and UDF

Fisherfolk were hailed as heroes during the devastating 2018 floods. But they have little politicial representation

Fisherfolk cast net to find political voice

Sudha.Nambudiri @timesofindia.com

People in the coastal belt and fisherfolk account for nearly 40% of Kerala's voters, a rich catch for political parties. They are mainly spread across nine districts. Though Kottayam has no coastline, it is effectively the 10th district with sizeable fisher communities living in inland regions. These communities are present in nearly 50 assembly seats. Yet, their representation in the assembly remains thin. In the outgoing House, there was just one MLA from the community.

This time, five candidates from the community are in the fray. LDF MLA Chitharanjan is seeking re-election. Others include former Lok Sabha MP and two-time MLA T N Prathapan of UDF, UDF candidate A D Thomas, and NDA candidates Arun Anirudhan and K R Rajesh.

Despite shared problems — climate change, declining marine catch, coastal erosion and sea surges that inundate homes — the community remains politically divided and has therefore failed to raise its demands with one voice. Traditionally guided by the LDF, the UDF and the Church, the Akhila Kerala Dheevara Sabha (AKDS) too has entered the political arena.

"Our representation is very poor even in local bodies. So we do not have a say when major projects are announced, either by the Centre or the state. This time too, it is the same," said Jackson Pollayil, state president of Kerala Swatantra Matsyathozhilali Federation, which largely represents traditional fisherfolk. A key demand has been recognition of fishermen's rights, on the lines of forest rights for tribals. "They protect tribal rights and believe tribals are the guardians of the forests. Similarly, we are protectors of the sea and the frontline soldiers of our waters," said V Dinakaran, former MLA and general secretary AKDS.

Latest data puts the number of active fisher families at around 10.4 lakh. Their active role in the seafood industry, inland fishing and aquaculture helps make Kerala the country's second-largest seafood exporter. Global developments and restrictions on seafood trade have a huge impact on them. On such issues, the community often protests, usually backed by Left or Congress-led unions.

The fisherfolk were hailed as heroes during the 2018 Kerala floods, rescuing families with their boats. But when cyclones and sea surges later damaged their own homes, many say political support was limited. Warming oceans have altered even the food habits of fisher households. Once-common fish varieties like chala and aiyla are no longer staples as they are not easily available now.

92 years | V S Achuthanandan's age when he won his last assembly contest, in 2016 from Malampuzha. The CPM stalwart was 43 when he was first elected to Kerala assembly, from Ambalappuzha in 1967. He was elected seven times in all and served as CM between 2006 and 2011. However, the oldest first-time MLA was O Rajagopal of BJP. He was 86 years old when he won from Nemom in 2016

POLL POURRI

25 years | Mathew T Thomas's age when he became MLA from Thiruvalla on a Janata Party ticket, the youngest in Kerala assembly history

IUML sheds old guard, bets on youth power

Rajeev.KR@timesofindia.com

As Kerala enters the final, high-octane phase of the 2026 election cycle, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the state's oldest Muslim political force, is attempting one of the most significant resets in its recent history.

Long the second-largest constituent of the UDF, and often its kingmaker, the party is moving away from its veteran-heavy, conservative image and trying to recast itself as younger, broader and more inclusive. Its candidate list offers the clearest sign yet of that shift.

Fresh Faces, New Signals

In a move that surprised many observers, IUML has dropped six sitting MLAs and fielded 10 fresh faces. Among them are youth and student-wing personalities such as P K Navas and Fathima Thahiliya, who have been chosen for high-stakes contests in Tanur and Perambra.

The party has also introduced younger candidates in relatively safer seats such as Kondotty and Koduvally.

The decision to field 34-year-old Fathima marks a notable shift in the party's approach to gender. For the first time in its history, and despite opposition from influential clergy groups, the Panakkad Sadikkali Shihab Thangal-led IUML has fielded two women. While Fathima will take on LDF convener T P Ramakrishnan, Jayanthi Rajan, a non-Muslim woman from a marginalised community, will contest from the general seat in Koothuparamba.

Fathima Thahiliya, from IUML's student wing, is contesting from the Perambra seat

The party has also fielded former Congress leader Sivan Veetikkunnu in a reserved constituency.

Veteran political analyst N P Chekkutty says the shift recalls an earlier turning point three decades ago, when a younger crop of leaders, including P K Kunhalikutty, helped move the party further into the secular mainstream.

"The leadership realises that it must evolve to remain relevant in a rapidly changing society," Chekkutty said. "The decision to give a ticket to a leader of the Haritha movement, who had earlier led internal rebellions for women's rights, shows a party willing to listen and adapt."

UDF's Moderate Anchor

IUML has also shown restraint in the face of provocative rhetoric from leaders of other communities such as Vellapally Natesan. By refusing to engage in retaliatory communal politics, the party is positioning itself as the moderate anchor of the UDF, aware that any religious friction could alienate the coalition's broader voter base.

That positioning is closely tied to the role of Sadikkali Thangal, who holds spiritual influence over Sunni sections in the state and serves as qazi for more than 1,500 mahals. He has sought to project an accommodative, bridge-building image through courtesy visits to Christian bishops and public gestures of goodwill during Christmas, though acts such as cake-cutting have drawn criticism from sections of the traditional clergy.

Even when detractors within the E K faction of the Samastha Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulama attempted to challenge his authority as a spiritual leader, Sadikkali Thangal held his ground. Since then, clerical opposition appears to have softened, with a more measured response emerging even on sensitive issues such as fielding women candidates.

A Calculated Reinvention

By pivoting towards a more modern and inclusive image, the IUML is hoping that a reworked version of its nearly eight-decade-old legacy will be better suited to Kerala's changing political landscape.

The gambit is clear: to remain relevant, not just as a dependable ally within UDF, but as a party capable of adjusting to shifting social expectations without surrendering its core base.

Border district, where politics speaks in many tongues

KP.Saikiran@timesofindia.com

In high-stakes, culturally diverse Kasaragod, the poll battle is shaped as much by language as by caste, religion or party loyalty. Often described as Saptha Bhasha Sangama Bhoomi (the land of seven languages), the district brings Malayalam, Kannada, Tulu, Urdu, Byari, Konkani and Marathi into the same arena, sometimes within a single ward. In such a landscape, multilingual fluency is less an advantage than a necessity.

For Manjeswaram MLA A K M Ashraf, this fluency is not a campaign skill but a lived reality. "My mother tongue is Byari," said UDF candidate, referring to the coastal Muslim identity of the constituency. His schooling in Kannada reflects Kasaragod's deep social and economic ties with neighbouring Karnataka.

What stands out, Ashraf said, is the ease with which languages travel across communities. "Malayalam is widely used among Muslims, Tulu among Hindus — but we are not confined to them; we exchange languages," he said.

That exchange plays out directly in electioneering. Campaign speeches rarely remain in one language, with candidates switching between Malayalam, Kannada and Tulu to connect with diverse audiences. At the booth level, party workers often double up as translators.

Though this diversity is unevenly distributed, it shapes electoral strategy across the district. Malayalam dominates the southern belt, while Kannada is widely used in the northern stretch, including Kasaragod town and Manjeswaram. Tulu, Konkani, Urdu, Byari and Marathi persist within tightly knit community clusters, forcing parties to craft hyper-local messaging.

"The use of multiple languages has never been a hindrance in communicating with the people here," said Rajmohan Unnithan, Kasaragod MP from the Congress-led UDF, who entered the district's political arena from Kerala. "I have felt that even those who speak other languages understand Malayalam well," he said.

At the same time, Unnithan noted that working in the district inevitably changes the way politicians communicate. "Over the years, I have also started picking up multiple languages," he said.

Vishnumurthy Daiva, a ritual of jumping into a heap of embers — an age-old feature of Tulu culture, being performed in Kasaragod

Unnithan has also raised the issue of Tulu in Parliament, seeking its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

Closer to the Karnataka border, the linguistic mix becomes more layered — Tulu in informal settings, Kannada in written communication, and Malayalam as the bridge language. For candidates, this means campaign material, speeches and even casual conversations must constantly shift, depending on the audience and location.

This multilingual character is not without complications. From an administrative perspective, language gaps can make even routine governance and law-enforcement more difficult. Much of this complexity is concentrated in the northern stretch between Melparamba and Manjeswaram, where multiple languages are used in everyday interactions.

"We always had to ensure that policemen posted in these stations knew Malayalam and Kannada," said senior IPS officer Vaibhav Saxena. Beyond these two dominant languages, he said, clusters of Marathi- and Konkani-speaking families add further layers to the communication landscape, sometimes allowing minor disputes to acquire a larger social edge.

"There have been instances where something as small as feeding a stray dog escalated into larger social tensions between people speaking different languages," Saxena said. "Issues are natural, but what usually settles them is dialogue. Here, that dialogue can become difficult."

In Kasaragod, speaking the right language can determine whether a message lands — or is lost altogether.

Why home-based healthcare must figure in your insurance planning

Insurance may cover some post-hospitalisation expenses, but long-term rehab and caregiving often require a separate healthcare corpus

Preeti.Kulkarni@timesofindia.com

Falls can be catastrophic for the elderly, often requiring complete rehabilitation at home. Ask Mumbai resident Ritesh Sheth, whose 74-year-old father Deepak Sheth fractured his hip after a fall in Dec 2025 and underwent surgery. "He was bedridden. The hospital arranged nursing services, and for two months, he required round-the-clock care," he says. The total cost of home care, including physiotherapy, was Rs 2.5 lakh.

It's not just senior citizens. US-based Jeetesh Hasijani, 31, injured a ligament during an offsite in Pune and required surgery, followed by nursing and physiotherapy. The post-surgery cost came to Rs 1 lakh. Like Sheth and Hasijani, more families are turning to home healthcare for post-surgical recovery, elderly and palliative care and chronic conditions. The trend is driven by an ageing population, nuclear families, rising chronic and lifestyle ailments, growing home healthcare availability and high hospital costs. "The Indian home healthcare market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19.3%," says Vikram Verma, senior VP and business head, MAX@Home, Max Healthcare's home-care arm.

Services range from doctor visits, physiotherapy to advanced care like home dialysis and ICU set-ups. Physiotherapy for stroke or Parkinson's can cost Rs 800-2,200 per visit. Non-medical caregivers may charge Rs 30,000-45,000 a month, says ElderAid CEO Santosh Abraham.

"Chemotherapy at home may cost between Rs 10,000-15,000 per session, depending on the duration, while peritoneal dialysis typically costs Rs 2,000-2,500 a day, excluding medicines and consumables," says Dr Gaurav Thukral, co-founder and president, HealthCare At Home.

Advantages And Drawbacks

Home healthcare and elderly care providers say opting for home treatment is cheaper than hospital care. "Home care is typically 25-50% cheaper than a hospital stay," says Abraham. Convenience and comfort are crucial factors too. "The risk of hospital-acquired infections is lower, and care is more personalised," he adds.

The decision on whether home treatment is feasible can be taken only after medical consultation, rather than just a cost-benefit analysis. It also depends on adequate space for patient and family.

HOW EXPENSES KEEP PILING UP

	Ritesh Sheth | Mumbai	Jeetesh Hasijani | 31, US/Jaipur
Home care needed for	Father, 74 yrs	Self
Ailment	Fall, leading to complex hip fracture, surgery in Dec 2025	Ligament injury, followed by surgery in Feb 2026
Home care service	Nursing and physiotherapy	Nursing and physiotherapy
Expenses incurred	Close to ₹2.5 lakh	Nearly ₹1 lakh so far

MONTHLY COST OF HOME CARE

24-hour trained home nurse
₹45,000–1 lakh
ICU-trained/critical care nurses in metros like Delhi and Mumbai

Attendant/caregiver (24 hr)
₹25,000–40,000
Untrained/semi-trained; for Alzheimer's/paralysis patients

Physiotherapy
₹10,000–20,000
₹800–1,500/session; typically 10-15 sessions/month for post-surgery/paralysis rehab

Speech therapy
₹10,000-13,000
₹1,200-1,600/session; assuming two sessions per week for Parkinson's patients

Source: MOSPI, Policybazaar; inputs from patients, caregivers and home-care firms. Costs could vary depending on needs, city and service providers

INSURANCE BILL

Plan	Age (yrs)	Annual premium (₹)
Niva Bupa — ReAssure 3.0 Black	40	9,988
	60	30,378
Star Health Super Star	40	10,475
	60	25,387
Aditya Birla — ActivOne Max	40	11,285
	60	28,015
ICICI Lombard — Elevate	40	10,147
	60	25,503

Source: Policybazaar.com. The products' scope of coverage includes home healthcare/ nursing expenses; list not exhaustive

Limitations Of Insurance

Health insurance policies cover post-hospitalisation expenses for 60 to 180 days. For Sheth and Hasijani, physiotherapy and nursing costs were covered. "This includes follow-ups, medicines and diagnostic tests linked to hospitalisation. Some also cover physiotherapy if arranged through empanelled providers," says Siddharth Singhal, head, health insurance, Policybazaar.com.

You must ascertain the exclusions and maintain records. "For instance, nursing and physiotherapy can be covered, depending on your policy's terms. However, you must submit detailed supporting papers. For physiotherapy claims, mention the number of sessions, dates and cost per session and maintain the bills," says Puneet Oberoi, founder, Finwise Services.

While most policies include a domiciliary hospitalisation clause, its scope is often restrictive. In recent years, some insurers have started covering home health care expenses, either within base policies or as add-on riders for additional premium. "Some plans now cover home-based treatment up to the sum insured for conditions such as chemotherapy, infectious diseases, peritoneal dialysis and palliative cancer care, along with nursing and doctor visits, provided it is based on doctor's advice, and there is continuous treatment with daily monitoring," says Singhal.

Offerings and policy terms vary. "Our policy allows home treatment when hospitalisation would otherwise be required if prescribed by the treating doctor, subject to some conditions," says Anshul Mittal, joint president and appointed actuary, HDFC ERGO. Such treatment — covered cashlessly — must ordinarily require inpatient care and be admissible under hospitalisation expenses. "Daily validation of patient records by a medical practitioner with investigation reports is mandatory," he adds.

"For long-term conditions like Parkinson's, regular outpatient physiotherapy is usually not covered under standard indemnity-based insurance," says Amarnath Saxena, CTO commercial, Bajaj General Insurance. Critical illness policies or riders, which pay a lump sum on diagnosis of ailments such as cancer, stroke, renal failure and Parkinson's, can act as supplementary covers. Personal accident policies, which cover death and disability, as well as injuries due to falls, can also come to your aid.

Create A Healthcare Fund

You need to plan for healthcare costs your policy won't cover. Estimate today's potential cost of long-term care, based on your lifestyle and city. "You should plan for minimum expenses of Rs 10,000 per month with no upper limit. Factor in inflation of 10-12% and build a corpus to cover 5-10 years of such costs. The minimum size must be Rs 10 lakh but can be higher, depending on your lifestyle and expectations of the quality of care," says Pankaj Mathpal, founder, Optima Money.

The instruments you choose to park your money in should be able to beat inflation. "A combination of debt funds and some hybrid funds, such as dynamic asset allocation funds and multi-asset funds, can be considered. Also, park funds in fixed deposits for greater stability and liquidity," he adds.

Don't let the correction go waste. Expert picks for '26

Markets have dipped, but investment opportunities abound. From staggered small-cap entries to the safety of debt, here is some actionable advice from four market experts

Image: AI

Partha.Sinha@timesofindia.com

With the Nifty and Sensex down in high single digits, the "red" on the screen can be daunting. However, seasoned money managers view this underperformance as a valuation reset rather than a long-term collapse. For the retail investor, the noise of the short term creates a window for long-term compounding. The key is not to retreat, but to reallocate into specific pockets of resilience.

The Thematic Play: AI & Energy

Motilal Oswal Group: The current phase reflects a correction in valuation, rather than structural deterioration. Times like these offer a choice between short-term noise and long-term opportunities. We are bullish on sectors with strong earnings visibility like financials, automobiles, and capital goods. A significant emerging theme is the rise in energy demand driven by AI, data centres, and electrification. This has far-reaching implications across power and infrastructure.

Consumption-linked sectors such as automobiles and discretionary will benefit as demand broadens. Healthcare offers defensive stability, while digital and e-commerce themes provide long-term compounding opportunities, albeit with a need for careful stock selection.

The 3-Year Horizon: Flexi-Caps

Taher Badshah, CIO, Invesco Mutual Fund Event risks are typically overstated by the market in the short run but invariably present lucrative opportunities from a 2-3 year horizon. The risk-reward for equity investors is much more attractive now than at the start of 2026. Investors should consider a range of options: flexi-cap strategies for medium-risk profiles, small-cap funds for those with high risk-appetite, and well-structured multi-asset funds for those seeking lower volatility.

The Safety Buffer: Short-Term Debt

Deepak Agrawal, CIO – Debt, Kotak Mutual Fund: Rising global uncertainties, including a ~40% increase in Brent crude since the conflict began, support a higher allocation to debt to reduce portfolio volatility. Over the past year, debt schemes — especially ultra-short and short-term funds — have outperformed equities. While longer-duration or credit funds offer higher potential returns, they require alignment with an investor's risk appetite. Right now, debt acts as a vital cushion.

The Value Hunt: Staggered SMID Entry

Sandeep Raina, head of research, Nuvama Professional Clients Group: We have reached a good price level in the small and mid-cap space, which has corrected more than the frontline stocks. In this scenario, investors should enter the market slowly and steadily, as these levels will not come back soon. While markets may remain volatile for a couple more months, the trajectory is eventually upward.

The consensus is clear: stop watching the daily tickers and start looking at entry points. Whether it is the defensive stability of healthcare or the high-growth potential of the "AI-Power" scrips, the current dip is an invitation to build a sturdier portfolio. Invest slowly, stay diversified, and keep your eyes on the 3-5 year horizon.

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SCAN and SUBSCRIBE

ASK THE EXPERTS

In the present scenario which mutual fund category is the most tax-efficient? Why?
— Gautam Panchmatia

Instead of asking which mutual fund (MF) category offers the lowest tax outgo, investors would do better to examine whether the product aligns with their risk appetite, financial goals and investment time horizon. Tax efficiency is important, but it should be a secondary filter, not the primary driver. A fund that saves tax but exposes you to volatility you cannot handle, or locks your money in for a period misaligned with your needs, can do more harm than good. Equity mutual funds continue to be among the most tax-efficient investment options available to retail investors, particularly when held for the long term. They benefit from favourable long-term capital gains taxation and the ability to generate inflation-beating returns over extended periods. However, equity funds can experience sharp interim declines, and investors must be prepared for volatility.

Vidya Bala
Co-founder, PrimeInvestor.in

I am a German citizen, and have an OCI card. How will inheritance of assets located in India be taxed for me? Is the inheritance itself taxable in India, or only the income generated from the inherited assets?
— Rajendran

Per the provisions of Section 56(2)(x) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 (corresponding to Section 92 of the Income Tax Act, 2025), receipt of assets by way of inheritance is excluded from taxation. Accordingly, the inheritance itself, whether comprising immovable property, shares or bank balances, is not taxable in India. Also, any income accruing or arising in India from the inherited assets, including rental income, interest, dividends, or capital gains upon subsequent transfer, would be subject to tax in India, in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Income Tax Act and considering the residential status for the relevant financial year. Relief, if any, under the India-Germany Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement may be examined based on the specific facts and circumstances.

Amit Maheshwari
Tax partner, AKM Global

Please send your queries to *toiwealthplus@timesofindia.com*, mentioning your full name and city of residence.

A thought for today

By god...thy drasty rhyming
is not worth a turd

CHAUCER, Canterbury Tales

No Man Left Behind

Be it the rescued US F-15 crew, or the thousands killed in Iran, their stories must be told without asymmetry

All life is valuable, so it's great that the US F-15 crew, shot down over Iran last week, has been rescued. Talk about the op easily turns to its dollar cost – around $300mn, by some estimates. But that misses the point – America rescues its soldiers, because it believes no price is too high to save them. What about other lives, though? What value do we place on the lives of enemy soldiers, and non-combatants on both sides?

While casualties are hard to ascertain in an ongoing war, at least 1,600 Iranian civilians – including around 250 children – have died in US and Israeli strikes, over the past five weeks. In Lebanon, the civilian toll is touching 1,500. Israel's toll is smaller, but considering that it's fighting a "war of choice", all casualties were avoidable. And Iraq, Kuwait, UAE, etc, aren't even at war, but have lost people.

Could this war have occurred if both parties to the "dispute" considered all life valuable? India, with its long pacifist tradition,

is attuned to such thinking, but it's time other nations paid heed, too. That's because a future that's far bloodier than the present, no longer seems unthinkable. For a long time, it was believed that WW2's devastation had inoculated the world against wars. But Ukraine, Iran, Gaza, Sudan, and other small and big conflicts, have shaken that certainty. Sworn pacifists like Germany and Japan, now feel the need to re-militarise.

Beyond govts, this war is a call for media, to assess priorities. Right now, the US airman's rescue has turned the narrative to American glory. But a barrage of celebratory stories – successively more Hollywoodian – veils the suffering of the other side. It's as though the real purpose of war isn't killing, but heroic rescues. We know that narratives shape wars. Vietnam war lasted as long as it did – and ended when it did – because of the way US media painted it over the years. And talking of narratives, Vietnam, even now, is remembered more for the loss of 58,000 US troops, than deaths of an estimated 3mn Vietnamese.

In the ongoing war, US and Israel would want everyone to only cheer their gains, and commiserate their losses. But borrowing the US military principle underlying the rescue – No Man Left Behind – media shouldn't allow "asymmetry" of the battlefield, to colour the tragedy of non-combatants. Because all life is valuable, the suffering of every man, woman, and child should be told.

Swear Therapy Works

But only in relationships of equality and trust. Else, like Trump's F-bombs, it tracks inequality and disdain

You upend the dal all over your kitchen, right after you have shined it. You curse, in front of your family. Trump is frustrated at how Iran is holding on, especially to Hormuz Strait. He curses, on the most jacked social media account today. It's a bloody big difference. Your F-bombs are in no way related to obliterating another country's power plants, or bridges. Your shock, anger, hurt, amazement...being vented through some profanity is, arguably, a very healthy thing. It can even be about keeping the peace. But high diplomacy and powerplay are an altogether different sphere. Here, F-bombing suggests dangerously diminished judgment.

It's not the same, necessarily, for tech moguls and other fat cats.

Musk, for example, we have christened the world's first FUcrat (bit.ly/3O8kmcz), agreeing with him that, sometimes, swearing does a f***ing fine job of expressing an emotion or idea. But, baby, context, context, context's the name of the game. The words that send one culture clutching pearls, don't even raise a brow in another. The super offensive Chinese curse, "F*** your ancestors to the 18th generation," only makes us desis giggle. Hindi fave "Bhains ki aankh" (buffalo's eye), brings an eyeroll from non-Hindiwalas.

Melissa Mohr's history of swearing, *Holy Sh*t*, finds the holy and the bodily to be its great poles. This is, simultaneously, a history of gendering. Female sexuality is the commoner vehicle for insult, and female swearing is more policed. In the end, every casual F-bomb or S-bomb constructs two audiences: one it will alienate, and one it won't. A kind of social sorting. That's why swearing by powerful people – in offices, classrooms, public life – is different from swearing among friends. The powerful person gets to *define* the room, deciding whose discomfort is irrelevant. Or who gets degraded. But among relative equals, it's a lovely stressbuster, even pain relief. Among colleagues, it can be sweeter than any HR feelgood missive gets.

A pause you can step into

How balconies make our lives better

Jairam N Menon

All rooms are equal, but the balcony is not a room. It's a handshake to the outdoors or, for those so inclined, a step inward, towards quiet contemplation. That's why balconies of all persuasions (whether narrow as an alley, wide as a salesman's smile, recessed, cantilevered, or the alluring Juliet version) used to be a prized, super saleable feature of most residential buildings, over a couple of storeys tall.

At home in Mumbai, a long, unadorned ledge – known in local patois as 'gallery' – running the length of my building, was the place where I could commune with the world, or hide in plain sight. But cities can't stand still. Itching to reinvent themselves, they flick the pages of their own past. Along with those flipped pages, went my half-dreamt dreams, unfinished stories and who knows, un-lived lives.

For the new shapers of urban destinies, deemed that balconies were not

pulling their weight, in terms of Return On Investment. Buyers seemed to agree. Given the option of a larger drawing room, or a roomier study, their choice was made in minutes. Where people prefer space to grace, the balcony had no place.

By erasing balconies from their master plans, trendy designers were forgetting the balcony's role in world history. Its credentials date back to Queen Victoria who, fresh from coronation, waved to the crowds from the Buckingham Palace balcony, setting a template for her heirs. Similarly, it was on the Casa Rosada balcony that Eva Peron morphed into Evita. And, of course, the goosebumps still come on when we replay the cramped balcony of Lords, where Kapil Dev & co were crowned world beaters. But talk about these passages from history today, and you will elicit a 'meh'. Quite literally, the balcony has no lobby!

Just as I was about to compose an epitaph to my cantilevered oasis, hope sprang afresh. Brand new buildings began sporting elevated, and eye-catching, features as part of the recipe for luxury living. Is karma behind the comeback? Or perhaps, it is love finding a way against the odds. Franz Kafka was prescient when he said, "Everything you love is very likely to be lost. But in the end, love will return in a different way." The balcony did return, now re-branded 'sky patio'.

Goodies From Uncle Assam

Himanta's electorally formidable 'mama' avatar is built on efficiently managed cash transfers, blended with language of kinship. He's the benevolent but stern family head. He selects who's kin & who's not. But avuncularity has its limits

Uday Chandra

Last month, in a grand act of political theatre, roughly 40L women, in Assam, received ₹9,000 each, in their bank accounts. Roughly half of the state's households received this lump sum payment as *upohar* (gift) from *mama*, as chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, is popularly known. These households already receive ₹1,250 monthly, under the Orunodoi 3.0 scheme. If monthly transfers provide security, a lump sum bonus is icing on the cake.

When money enters a household, via a woman's bank account, *mama's* gift recasts the recipients as *baideu* and *bhonti* (older and younger sisters), and their children as *lora-suwali* (male and female children). These are more than terms of address; they map a political relationship onto kinship. Female welfare beneficiaries are invited to join an extended household that embraces all castes and tribes in Assam. A needy citizen's right *(adhikar)* to welfare, thus, becomes a gift *(upohar)*.

Home, community & state

In this new model of governance, humble village *satras* matter as much as famous shrines in Kamakhya and Hajo. *Satras* are religious and cultural centres established in the wake of the popular Vaishnav bhakti movement led by Srimanta Sankardev. Grants to village *satras* and reclaiming *satriya* lands have, unsurprisingly, been priorities of the Sarma govt. These socio-religious institutions bind rural households into village communities under a female-friendly welfare state. Jai Shri Ram chants or calls for vegetarian street food may not work in Assam's complex social terrain, but bounded inclusion of households, recognised as authentically Assamese, has produced a distinctive model of welfare governance.

Of course, the same model, under *mama's* leadership, excludes Bengali-speaking miya Muslims, insofar as linguistic subnationalism acquires a blood-and-soil character. Yet Bengali Hindus, historical targets of Assamese subnationalism, are now embraced in Sarma's Assam after bearing the brunt of Supreme Court-mandated NRC, during the previous BJP govt of Sarbananda Sonowal.

At the same time, Assamese-speaking Muslims are legally recognised as indigenous by the Sarma govt in five subgroups: *moria*, *goria*, *deshi*, *syed*, and *julha*.

This kind of social organisation cannot be characterised as either Hindu nationalism or Assamese subnationalism. It is a hybrid model of governance that pragmatically sketches out a post-NRC Assamese electorate.

Protection & punishment

It must be noted that *mama* in eastern India is not merely a loving uncle. Police on the prowl are often called *mama*. So, too, are rampaging elephants. What is 'felt', or deemed as protection, and danger from that very protector, are two sides of the same coin. Kinship is, similarly, a double-edged sword: it may bind *baideu-*

Image: AI

bhonti and *lora-suwali* to Himanta *mama*, but it also promises protection via *dandniti* (punishment). To defy *mama*, in other words, invites his wrath.

Sarma is not an organic product of BJP-RSS ecosystem. He is an ex-Congressman who fell out with Rahul Gandhi before joining BJP. Yet Sarma, as a hybrid political figure, is among the most visible and vocal BJP CMs in recent years. He has brought the kind of broad welfare coalition stitched together by Congress govts, in Assam, within the saffron umbrella of Modi's India. As a Congressman operating within BJP's networked national framework, Sarma does more than fuse welfare and personality. His gifts distribute welfare across the state's diverse communities, stabilising rural households during a post-pandemic phase of economic recovery.

Himanta as *mama* may appear as a giver, to welfare beneficiaries and as a protector-administrator of Assamese interests. Yet he is also an indispensable intermediary through which Delhi's fiscal largesse is conjoined to Assam's household finances.

Centre's cash, Sarma's catch

Nearly two-thirds of the state budget comes as grants-in-aid and tax devolution from the Centre. Additionally, 90% of nationwide schemes in this special category state are borne by Delhi. The money that reaches Assamese households is, therefore, locally delivered but nationally sourced. Sarma's political craft lies in the last mile, turning pooled fiscal flows into personalised credit, which, in turn, is expected to generate gratitude, if not loyalty. This is how technocratic abstractions become intimate kinship ties. The gift comes from the system; the gratitude attaches to the man.

Assam's welfare architecture poses a formidable challenge to the Opposition. Congress and regional rivals cannot oppose direct cash transfers. They can try to match Sarma's bid, but risk imitation. They can try to outbid, but risk disbelief. Charges of personal corruption levelled at Sarma and his wife must be weighed against the enviable efficacy of welfare delivery.

Nonetheless, Himanta's hybrid setup comes with its own challenges. It speaks a familial language, but operates through economic incentives. As direct transfers become regular and widespread, *upohar* will begin to lose its aura. Households will begin to compare rival welfare bids in a competitive political marketplace. Idioms of kinship may persist, but *lora-suwali* who accept *mama's* gifts today may seek more in future.

When elections start to resemble auctions, bidding wars are likely to raise welfare floors, harden voter expectations, and render loyalty contingent, even fickle. For now, Himanta *mama* commands affection. But his wards are growing up, and ₹1,250 per month may not suffice for long. The grammar of kinship may, in sum, be less durable than it appears.

The writer is a political analyst

American, White, Working Class & Anti-Trump

Whether or not he says he's 'won' in Iran, US prez is losing badly at home. So much so, many Republican strategists fear Democrats will sweep not just midterms, but 2028 presidential poll, too

Patrick Basham

Columnist based in Washington DC

In Jan 2016, Trump famously boasted, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose any voters." For a decade, he was correct. Not only did voters not abandon him, but impeachments, indictments, a conviction, and a forcefully contested election outcome intensified his support.

Until now. When US attacked Iran five weeks ago, Trump's hold slipped. The combination of a continuing affordability crisis, a lack of prosecutorial progress on the Epstein files, and a stalled domestic agenda, had already loosened his voters' legendary loyalty. But the Iran war took their misgivings to a new level.

Why are many Trump voters disenchanted with him over the war, with some feeling, literally, betrayed by him? Since entering national politics in 2015, a non-interventionist, "America First" foreign policy was central to Trump's message, and fundamental to his appeal.

Trump repeatedly, and explicitly, stated his opposition to regime change, nation-building, and endless wars, including Iran specifically. During his 2024 campaign, Trump frequently pledged no war with Iran. In his victory speech, he said, "I'm not going to start a war. I'm going to stop wars," a credible promise, as he was the first president in the modern era not to start a war.

Such promises helped Trump tremendously. Most Americans view the nation's 21st century interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and elsewhere, as costly failures. While Republican and Democratic parties' respective foreign policy establishments both remain decidedly interventionist, the majority of voters remain decidedly non-interventionist, absent a direct threat to their homeland.

Younger, minority, working-class, and politically independent Americans are especially non-interventionist. A good many of them, including first-time and occasional voters, cast ballots for Trump, because of his first term foreign policy record – and explicit promises of more of the same.

Like the majority of voters overall, many Trump voters do not think Iran posed an imminent threat to US. Nor do they feel any safer now that Iran's nuclear programme is allegedly bombed into impotence. Launching war with Iran broke a central tenet of faith among this faction of Trump voters: he would never abandon a core foreign policy pledge, simply to appease

Image: AI

political elites in Washington DC, or a foreign govt.

It helps to differentiate among Trump voters. Self-described MAGA voters are largely in favour of the war. Trump's problem is the number of voters who consider themselves MAGA, has shrunk. Today, a narrow majority of Trump voters call themselves 'America First'. This group is mostly opposed to Iran war.

Then there are MAHA voters. These 'Make America Healthy Again' voters were drawn, above all, to Robert Kennedy Jr's alliance with Trump. But, not simply on public health policy grounds. They endorsed Kennedy's (and Trump's) Ukraine war scepticism, and antipathy, to regime-change wars. Our polling finds MAHA voters massively against the war.

Trump's presidency has clearly become unpopular. His approval ratings reflect significant drops in support among independent-minded voters, young voters, new voters, and minority voters.

Most worrisome for Trump, is the loss of support among the white working class that anchored his political appeal through three elections. If the 2024 election was replayed today, Trump could not recreate the voter coalition that swept him to victory two years ago.

Should Trump send American troops to fight on Iranian territory, his approval ratings, and his party's electoral prospects, would sink even further. Our polling finds only 10% of voters support a ground invasion of Iran.

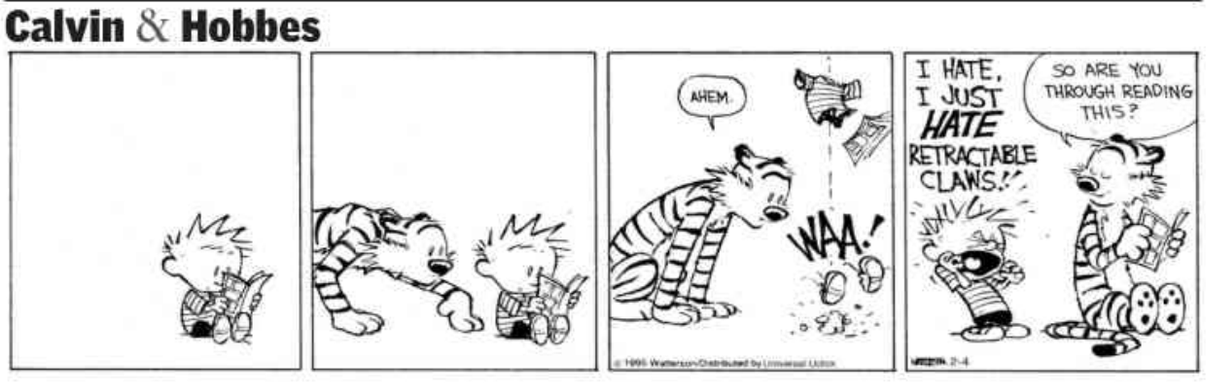
Nov's midterm congressional elections already look dismal for Trump's party. Republicans were always carrying an inherent incumbency disadvantage, but an electorate that did not feel better off than under Trump's predecessor, is now paying much higher gas prices too. It is probable Democrats will win control of both House of Representatives and Senate; many Republican strategists now consider a Democratic presidential victory likely in 2028.

Whatever the war's policy merits or demerits, Trump made a poor political choice when he attacked Iran. In last week's primetime speech, again he chose not to make the smart political choice. He chose not to stop the political bleeding by declaring 'victory', not to implicitly acknowledge the war's limitations, and not to end American involvement.

If Trump's plans for a liberated, and militarily defanged, Iran actually came to pass, many Trump voters would, nonetheless, fear the electoral cost of a 'free' Iran to be an America wholly governed by Democrats. That is a price they, at least, are not willing to pay.

The writer is director of Democracy Institute, US

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacred*space*

Religions, which condemn the pleasures of sense, drive men to seek the pleasures of power. Throughout history power has been the vice of the ascetic.

Bertrand Russell

The Secret Strength Of Temptation

Partha Sinha

Temptation has always had poor public relations. Civilisations have issued warnings about it with impressive consistency. Priests spoke of it like a crack in the soul. Philosophers treated it as a moral ambush. Parents invoked it with the urgency usually reserved for traffic and strangers.

In stories, temptation rarely arrives in its ordinary clothes. It comes wrapped in metaphor. A fruit glowing on a quiet tree. A shimmer in the forest that looks a little too beautiful to be natural. Something about temptation has always made storytellers suspicious. Perhaps because temptation reveals a truth we would rather not confront.

Only the living are tempted. A mountain is never tempted. A stone does not argue with itself. Temptation belongs exclusively to beings who can imagine another possibility. In that sense, temptation is not merely a moral test. It is evidence of consciousness.

The moment temptation appears, a thought, a taste, a possibility the mind was not planning to entertain, something remarkable begins. Desire leans forward. Discipline clears its throat. Curiosity quietly takes notes.

The sages called this weakness. But perhaps it is the opposite. Perhaps temptation is simply the mind discovering that the road has more than one direction. Which is why our mythologies circle around temptation with almost ritual fascination.

THE SPEAKING TREE

In one ancient tale, knowledge hangs quietly from a branch until someone wonders what knowing might feel like. In another, a glittering deer leads a warrior away from the safety of attention. Elsewhere, a game of dice becomes a theatre where pride, greed and destiny sit down at the same table.

Temptation, it appears, is the narrative engine of civilisation. Without it, most epics would end on page three. Yet societies have always been wary of it.

Order prefers predictable citizens. Temptation introduces volatility. A person wrestling with temptation is thinking, weighing, questioning. Institutions prefer obedience. Temptation breeds reflection.

So, temptation is vilified.

But look closely and the logic begins to wobble. Virtue itself depends on temptation. A monk renouncing the world must first feel the tug of the world. Patience is meaningless without impatience. Even restraint owes its existence to the presence of desire.

Without temptation, virtue would be unemployed. This is why temptation makes us weaker and stronger at the same time. When we yield, we encounter our fragility. When we resist, we discover our strength. Either way, we learn something essential about the architecture of our own mind.

There is also a quiet hypocrisy in how societies speak about temptation. The same cultures that preach restraint have built magnificent industries around seduction. Markets tempt us hourly – with brighter screens, sweeter flavours, faster pleasures. Advertising has become the organised science of temptation, conducted with algorithms instead of violins. Temptation is condemned in sermons and manufactured in boardrooms.

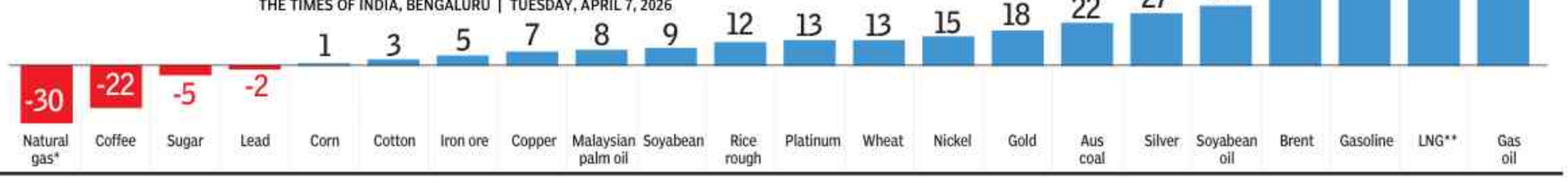
And then, when individuals stumble under this carefully engineered avalanche of desire, the blame returns politely to personal morality. Perhaps temptation has been misunderstood.

Temptation is not merely a moral trap. It is a mirror. It reveals what we long for, what we fear, and what we can refuse. Character does not grow in the absence of temptation. It grows in its shadow. The saint and the sinner are, in this sense, cousins. Both have heard the same whisper. And perhaps that is the quiet secret temptation carries within it.

TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026

Due to the West Asia conflict, there is broad-based **upward pressure across the energy complex**, which will impact input costs and inflation dynamics, says a report by SBI Mutual Fund. In contrast, most agricultural commodities and precious metals have remained relatively contained

*Natural gas: US Henry Hub price; **LNG: Japan/Korea Marker price
Source: Bloomberg, SBIFM Research; NB



Peace talks, rupee gains boost sensex

Mumbai: Sensex rose 787 points on Monday as crude prices eased on ceasefire talks in West Asia, while a firmer rupee supported sentiment even as foreign investors continued to sell Indian equities. The sensex closed at 74,106, up 1.1% from its previous close of 73,319. The rupee ended at 93.1 per dollar, little changed from 93.1 on Thursday, extending gains after a sharp rally late last week. In equity markets, foreign portfolio investors sold Rs 8,167 crore worth of stocks, while domestic institutional investors bought Rs 8,088 crore. The rupee's recent gains have been driven by policy action, even as markets remain cautious, reflected in wide spreads between onshore and offshore markets. On Thursday, the currency rose nearly 2%, its biggest daily gain in over a decade. TNN

Everstone invests ₹1,381 cr in Wingify

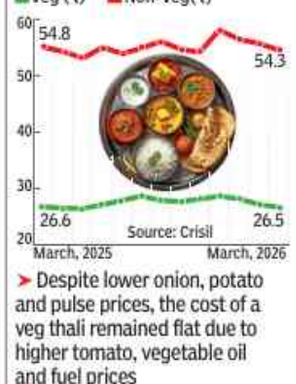
Bengaluru: Everstone Capital has infused Rs 1,381 crore into Wingify, the maker of experimentation platform VWO, through a rights issue, according to regulatory filings.
The investment follows Everstone's acquisition of a controlling stake in Wingify earlier this year in a deal valued at around $200 million, marking one of the larger recent transactions in India's SaaS space. TNN

Silver jumps ₹5k; gold advances ₹2.3k

New Delhi: Silver prices jumped Rs 5,000 to Rs 2.4 lakh per kg in Delhi on Monday, while gold advanced to Rs 1.5 lakh per 10 grams due to easing crude oil rates and a weak US dollar. In the international market, spot silver rose 0.5% to $73.4 per ounce and gold gained 0.1% to $4,682.8 per ounce. AGENCIES

MIXED PLATTER

The cost of a home-cooked veg thali was flat YoY, while that of a non-veg fell 1% in March



- Despite lower onion, potato and pulse prices, the cost of a veg thali remained flat due to higher tomato, vegetable oil and fuel prices
- The cost of a non-veg thali fell due to an estimated 2% YoY decline in broiler prices

Tata Sons' new ventures to post losses of up to ₹29k cr

Revamp Plan Likely By June After Concerns Flagged By Noel Tata

Reeba.Zachariah
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Amid financial concerns flagged by Tata Trusts chairman Noel Tata regarding Tata Sons' new ventures, the businesses are now estimated to incur a combined loss of Rs 29,000 crore in FY26, sharply higher than an earlier projection of Rs 5,700 crore, according to internal estimates reviewed by **TOI**.

Losses for the first nine months of FY26 have already reached Rs 21,700 crore, compared with Rs 16,550 crore for all of FY25, with Tata Digital, Air India, Tata Electronics, and Tejas Networks accounting for the bulk. After narrowing from Rs 16,550 crore in FY23 to Rs 11,800 crore in FY24, losses rose again in FY25 and have surged further in FY26, reflecting a fluctuating but overall upward trend.

The widening gap between projected and actual performance was among the factors behind the deferral of Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran's third-term reappointment at the Feb board meeting. He is expected to present a plan at the June board meeting to rein in losses at new ventures, a sore point that Noel Tata has placed much emphasis on.

In particular, the unlisted Tata Digital—which houses BigBasket, Tata 1mg, Croma, Tata CLiQ, and the super app Tata Neu—is emerging as a key concern. Conceived by Chandrasekaran in 2019, Tata Digital has yet to turn profitable, despite Tata Sons investing over Rs 24,000 crore, including acquisitions.

Its FY26 consolidated losses are estimated to cross Rs 5,000 crore, the highest since inception. It has recorded losses of over Rs 3,750 crore in the first nine months of FY26, surpassing its initial full-year projection, internal estimates showed.

While new ventures typically have a gestation period and require sustained funding, their financials are expected to improve over time, Tata Group observers said. However, Tata Digital's performance, they added, has lagged over the past three years, with revenue growth of just 10% year on year. It has also seen three CEO changes in its short history.

"While the gestation argument is real, there were missteps: leadership instability, slow product improvements, and a loyalty programme mistaken for a growth engine," said Thomas Kuruvilla, managing partner of Arthur D Little. He added that rivals outpaced BigBasket not on brand but on execution. "They won on dark store density and delivery speed, the unglamorous infrastructure work Tata Digital underinvested in."

Of Tata Digital's Rs 4,610 crore loss in FY25, BigBasket accounted for Rs 2,007 crore, Croma Rs 1,091 crore, Tata 1mg Rs 276 crore, and Tata CLiQ Rs 14 crore. A similar pattern is projected for FY26.

"Unlike its competitors, BigBasket is not that visible to customers. A lot of its customers have moved to other platforms. Tata, it seems, is not keen on spending more money on it and is instead focusing on profitability," said Satish Meena, founder at Datum Intelligence. Blinkit leads the quick commerce market with an over 40% share. Swiggy Instamart and Zepto keep swinging between 24-27% share, while BigBasket, Flipkart and Amazon collectively hold 10% share, Meena said.

Some Tata Group observers are questioning Tata Digital's role, arguing that its services could be delivered profitably by individual group companies such as Titan, Trent, Tata AIG, and Indian Hotels. They also question why the group is burning Rs 5,000 crore in Tata Digital, which they see largely as a loyalty programme funded by these companies.

Air India, however, remains the biggest drag. Its FY26 loss is expected to touch Rs 20,000 crore, far exceeding an earlier estimate of Rs 2,000 crore, with nine-month losses already at Rs 15,000 crore. By comparison, FY25 losses were Rs 11,000 crore.

Holding management fully accountable for Air India's FY26 losses would be "unfair and analytically lazy," Kuruvilla said. Between Pakistan's airspace closure (costing an estimated Rs 5,000 crore annually), oil above $100, and the Ahmedabad flight crash, they have been navigating a "perfect storm". "The real question is not whether management caused the losses—they didn't—but whether they built enough financial resilience to absorb shocks of this scale. That answer is less comfortable."

While "geopolitics excuses the financials, it does not excuse the customer experience," Kuruvilla said. Four years into private ownership, service consistency should not still be generating the same complaints it inherited from the govt. "The external environment may be brutal, but inside the cabin, that is entirely Tata's problem to own," Kuruvilla said. Other new ventures are also under scrutiny. Tata Electronics, the unlisted semiconductor business, is projected to register a Rs 3,000 crore loss in FY26.

MOVES NOT PAYING OFF FOR TATA SONS

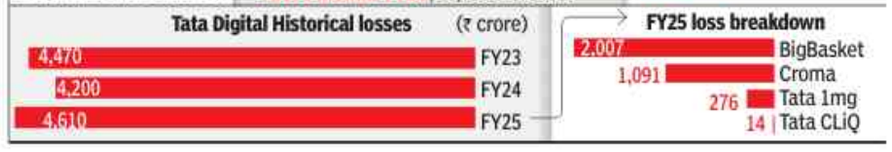
Combined losses of Tata Digital, Air India, Tata Electronics and Tejas Networks
FY26 estimated loss: ₹29,000 crore (earlier projection: ₹5,700 crore loss)
First 9 months FY26: ₹21,700 crore loss (FY25 full year: ₹16,550 cr loss)

Tata Digital
- Brainchild of Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran, set up in 2019
- **Total investment by Tata Sons including acquisitions** over ₹24,000 crore

Businesses | BigBasket, Tata 1mg, Croma, Tata CLiQ, Tata Neu
FY26 projected loss | ₹5,000 crore
First 9 months FY26 | ₹3,750 crore loss

Air India
- Reacquired by Tata Sons in 2022 from the government

FY26 projected loss: ₹20,000 crore (earlier estimate: ₹2,000 crore loss)
First 9 months FY26: ₹15,000 crore loss
FY25 loss: ₹11,000 crore



Lenders may offer new start to defaulting cos

Process Resembles Negotiated Settlement For Creditors, Promoters Under Revised IBC

Mayur.Shetty
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, originally designed to unseat promoters of companies defaulting on loans, is now opening a window for some of them to stay on and attempt a revival under creditor oversight.

The original framework was unambiguous. Section 29A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code barred wilful defaulters and delinquent promoters from bidding for their own assets, and the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) moved control away from management to a resolution professional. The rationale was that promoters of defaulting companies could not avail the benefit of any write down by the lenders.

The proposed Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code Amendment Bill 2026 introduces a different route. The Creditor Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process (CIIRP) allows the board of the defaulting company to remain in charge of day-to-day operations even after lenders trigger resolution. This debtor-in-possession model marks a departure from the earlier creditor-in-control structure. Instead of a takeover, the process resembles a negotiated settlement, where creditors and promoters, recognise that extraneous events call for reworking the loan obligations and work towards a resolution plan that can secure judicial approval.

The mechanics depend on consolidation. In large exposures, individual lenders rarely hold 51% of the debt needed to drive decisions. Asset Reconstruction Companies, which aggregate distressed loans, are expected to play that role. By pooling debt and coordinating action, they can create the majority required to initiate and steer the process. "The utility of ARC as a resolution platform will significantly get enhanced with CIIRP. With aggregated debt and experience in handling restructuring, they are placed at strategic advantage to drive CIIRP for better resolution outcomes at shorter time. CIIRP blends commercial wisdom with judicial approval, in improving revival prospects for genuine stressed assets," said Hari Hara Mishra, CEO, Association of ARCs in India.

The timing is not incidental. Supply chain disruptions from the West Asia conflict are beginning to stress sections of industry, raising the prospect of fresh defaults. Under CIIRP, promoters facing distress get an opportunity to stabilise operations without losing ownership, while lenders gain from faster resolution timelines. The process is capped at 150 days, extendable by 45 days, compared with the 330-day outer limit under CIRP. If the effort fails, the case reverts to the conventional insolvency route.

Incentives, too, shift. Under imminent insolvency, promoters often have little reason to preserve value, leading to diversion of resources or prolonged litigation. By allowing the possibility of retaining control if the business is revived, the new framework seeks to align promoter behaviour with creditor interests.

FRESH LEASE OF LIFE

- The **Creditor Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process** (CIIRP) allows the board of the defaulting company to remain in charge of day-to-day operations even after lenders trigger resolution
- **Promoters facing distress get an opportunity to stabilise operations** without losing ownership, while lenders gain from faster resolution timelines under CIIRP
- The **process is capped at 150 days, extendable by 45 days,** compared with the 330-day outer limit under CIRP
- The timing is not incidental. **Supply chain disruptions from the West Asia conflict are beginning to stress sections of industry,** raising the prospect of fresh defaults

Wipro wins $1 billion deal from Olam Group

Co To Buy Group's Digital Arm For $375Mn

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Wipro secured one of its largest deals from Singapore-based Olam Group, with a total contract value expected to exceed $1 billion, including an $800 million committed spend.

The win under CEO **Srini Pallia** signals a return to a high-stakes mega deal playbook, with the company putting more skin in the game.

Under the eight-year agreement, Wipro will deliver transformation services to Olam through a consulting-led, AI-powered approach, with an annual committed spend of $100 million. Olam supplies food, ingredients, feed and fibre to nearly 22,000 customers globally, with operations spanning over 60 countries across farming, processing and distribution.

This marks Wipro's second-largest deal after its $1.5 billion contract with Alight Solutions in 2018. As part of the engagement, Wipro will deploy solutions across Olam's 'farm-to-fork' value chain—covering farming, forecasting, trading, supply chain operations and customer engagement—aimed at improving efficiency, resilience and long-term growth.

Wipro expands farm-to-fork capabilities by combining Mindsprint expertise

In parallel, Olam is divesting its IT and digital services arm, Mindsprint, to Wipro for $375 million as part of its Updated 2025 reorganisation plan. Mindsprint has over 3,200 employees and serves clients across food and agribusiness, manufacturing, retail and CPG, and healthcare and life sciences, including large enterprises in the US, Asia-Pacific and the Middle East. The combined capabilities are expected to accelerate Olam's mission-critical programmes and deliver scalable outcomes. Sunny Verghese, co-founder and group CEO of Olam, said the move aligns with the company's reorganisation plan to sharpen focus on core businesses and enhance shareholder value. "Bringing together Mindsprint's deep food and agribusiness expertise with Wipro's global capabilities will create strong synergies for growth and end-to-end transformation across the value chain," he said. Pallia said the partnership marks a key step in expanding Wipro's farm-to-fork capabilities. "By combining Mindsprint's domain expertise and IP-led solutions with Wipro's consulting-led, AI-powered approach, we aim to unlock growth, drive innovation and deliver market-ready transformation for Olam Group and global clients," he said.

Under the agreement, Mindsprint will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wipro, subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions. The transaction is expected to close in the June quarter.

Boards must improve quality of questions, says Sebi chief

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Sebi chief Tuhin Kanta Pandey has said that corporate governance must now move beyond structure and process and focus on capability, with boards needing to improve their "quality of engagement" within the existing framework.

"The effectiveness of governance will not be merely determined by how comprehensive our regulations are... it will be determined by the quality of questions asked in boardrooms." He said that while "we have built a robust skeletal structure of governance" the real test lies in "how strong is the system that enables the structure to function effectively."

Speaking at the CII Corporate Governance Summit on Monday, Pandey said the current environment of geopolitical shocks, technological disruption and rising investor expectations has made governance more complex, noting that "governance is no longer about preventing what can go wrong" but about enabling institutions "to respond wisely when uncertainty arises."

> The effectiveness of governance will not be merely determined by how comprehensive our regulations are... it will be determined by the quality of questions asked in boardrooms
> —Tuhin Kanta Pandey | SEBI CHIEF

He outlined shifts needed in boardrooms, including "moving from information to insight, from form to substance in independence, and from compliance-driven discussions to value-driven conversations."

He said these changes do not necessarily require new regulations but a change in approach within boardrooms.

Highlighting gaps, he said that "boards are well constituted, but not always equally effective," adding that "information is available, but not always interrogated deeply," and that "independence exists in form, but may not always translate into independent perspective." He noted that independent directors often face constraints as their understanding of the company is largely shaped by board materials and management narratives, even as they are expected to provide oversight without being involved in day-to-day operations.

Emphasising the role of independent directors, Pandey said they stand for interests of the minority shareholders, and are not only for compliance and pointing fingers at management.

GeM reports 7.4% decline in transactions

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: State-run public procurement platform Govt e-Marketplace (GeM) recorded a 7.4% decline in transactions in FY26, with gross merchandise value (GMV) at Rs 5 lakh crore, compared with Rs 5.4 lakh crore in the previous financial year, officials said Monday.

GeM CEO Mihir Kumar attributed the fall largely to lower procurement by coal ministry, whose share in total GMV fell sharply. "Last year, the ministry of coal contributed close to 39% of GMV. This year, it has come down to about 20%, mainly due to unique procurement related to mine development and operations services, which was significantly lower this year," Kumar said. Despite the decline, coal remained top procurement ministry for GeM, while Coal India emerged as the leading public sector buyer as major procurement during FY26 came from central ministries.

Q4 sales: BMW edges past Mercedes-Benz

G Balachandar | TNN

Chennai: After nearly 13 years, BMW has edged past fellow German rival Mercedes-Benz to top India's luxury car market in the March quarter of FY26. However, for the full fiscal FY26, Mercedes-Benz retained its No. 1 position.

BMW Group sold 4,944 luxury vehicles (including cars & SUVs) in Q4 FY26, while Mercedes-Benz sold about 4,860 units during the same period, according to data from the Vahan dashboard. The lead may be slender, but it marks the culmination of a steady climb by BMW, which has been narrowing the gap in recent years. BMW has more than doubled its annual volumes in about four years, helping it close in on Mercedes-Benz, while also witnessing strong traction in its premium electric cars, which accounted for a little over a fifth (21%) of its sales in Q4 FY26.

LUXURY CAR RACE HEATS UP

Q4	Mercedes	BMW
FY26	4,944	4,860
FY26	18,164	17,340
FY25	17,697	15,108
FY24	15,681	13,667
FY23	14,435	10,888
FY22	11,006	8,557

Source: Vahan Dashboard

Auto dealers flag dispatch delay as war hits parts supply

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The West Asia conflict has led to component supply disruptions for auto dealers. Over 50% of them have reported dispatch delays and logistical challenges, revealed a survey by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA).

Total retail sales of vehicles have touched a record of about 3 crore units in 2025-26, showing a growth of 13.3% compared to previous fiscal. However, the survey found that over half of the dealers saw disruptions in component supply or delay in dispatches, with 17% of them reporting dispatch delays of three weeks or more.

The commercial vehicle segment has been most impacted, while car and two-wheeler dealers flagged delays in making specific variants, due to component supply disruptions.

SURVEY

FADA further stated that fuel prices are emerging as a concern. More than a third of the dealers said rising fuel prices are affecting customer purchase decisions, lengthening buying cycles and pushing buyers towards CNG and electric vehicles.

Ravi Bhatia, president at automotive intelligence firm JATO Dynamics India, said carmakers have increased prices due to the West Asia conflict.

"Manufacturers have begun selective price increases to offset rising raw material costs, logistics pressures and rupee depreciation," adding that prolonged supply chain disruptions from the conflict could affect production, while moderating industry growth.

Looking ahead, dealer confidence for FY27 remained positive, with more than two-thirds of the dealers expecting retail sales growth in the 3-7% range. However, they flagged three major risks, including economic slowdown and weak consumer sentiment, OEM supply disruptions and rise in fuel prices.

Amazon pares Fresh as it pushes quick delivery

Supriya.Roy@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Amazon is preparing to scale down its 4–24 hour grocery delivery service, Amazon Fresh, in several major Indian cities as it sharpens focus on its quick commerce offering, AmazonNow, according to a UBS Global Research report.

The transition is expected to play out across 10–15 large urban markets where AmazonNow is being expanded, effectively replacing Amazon Fresh in these locations, the report said. The move underscores Amazon's shift towards faster fulfilment models amid intensifying competition in India's quick commerce segment, led by players such as Blinkit, Zepto and Swiggy Instamart.

AmazonNow, currently live in six cities including Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi, is being positioned as the company's primary vehicle for rapid delivery. UBS estimates the service could expand to around 10 cities in the near term. "We understand AmazonNow's AOV (average order value) is Rs 260–300, while mature stores (over six months old) see higher AOV of Rs 320–360. The lower AOV versus Blinkit and Instamart is largely due to its current focus on FMCG, with categories like electronics and toys being added only recently," the report noted.

The quick commerce push is being backed by a rapidly expanding dark store network. AmazonNow operates roughly 450 dark stores and is adding about two stores a day, with the network expected to scale up significantly over the next year. Even as it pivots to faster deliveries in urban centres, Amazon continues to invest in its national logistics backbone. The company operates over 20 large warehouses for its broader ecommerce operations and is expected to expand this footprint further by mid-2026 to improve delivery timelines.

Amazon Fresh, which remains operational in over 100 cities, will continue in markets where quick commerce has yet to be rolled out. However, in cities where AmazonNow is introduced, Fresh is likely to be phased down, reflecting a broader shift from scheduled grocery deliveries to instant fulfilment models.

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026

POLITICIANS AND DIAPERS MUST BE CHANGED OFTEN, AND FOR THE SAME REASON — MARK TWAIN

GIGI HADID DENIES ANY EPSTEIN TIES AFTER FILES MENTION HER NAME: 'HAD NO AFFILIATION WITH THE DISGUSTING HUMAN BEING'

HALLE BAILEY SAYS HER 'VILLAGE OF WOMEN' HELPS RAISE HER 2-YEAR-OLD SON: 'YOU DON'T DO IT ALONE'

Airstrikes on Iran kill 25

Iranian Missiles Hit Israeli City Of Haifa, 4 Dead

Israel and the US carried out a wave of attacks on Iran on Monday, killing more than 25 people, and Iran responded with missile fire on Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbours.

Explosions rang out in Tehran and low-flying jets could be heard for hours as the capital was pounded. Thick black smoke rose near the city's Azadi Square after one airstrike hit the grounds of the Sharif University of Technology. Iranian missiles hit the northern Israeli city of Haifa, where four people were found dead in the rubble of a residential building.

Airstrikes hit Tehran univ linked to weapons work

One of Monday's morning airstrikes targeted Tehran's Sharif University of Technology, where Iranian media reported damage to the buildings as well as a natural gas distribution site next to the campus.

It wasn't immediately clear what had been targeted on the grounds of the university, which is empty of students as the war has forced all schools into the country into online classes. However, multiple countries over the years have sanctioned the university for its work with the military, particularly on Iran's ballistic missile programme, which is controlled by the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

A strike near Eslamshar, southwest of Tehran, killed at least 15 people, authorities said. Five others were killed when a residential area in the city of Qom was hit, and six more were killed in strikes on other cities, the state-run IRAN daily newspaper reported. Three more people were killed when an airstrike hit a home in Tehran, Iranian state television reported.

AFP

NO END TO BATTLE: A screengrab taken from a video relesed by Iran's state broadcaster on Monday show what it says are drones launched at US targets at Saudi Arabia's Al-Kharj base and Kuwait's Al-Adiri base

South Pars natural gas field hit, claims Iran media

Attacks targeted facilities at Iran's South Pars natural gas field on Monday, Iranian media outlets reported. The semiofficial Fars news agency and the judiciary's Mizan news agency both reported the attack, blaming America and Israel. Neither country immediately claimed any attack on the gas field at Asaluyeh in Iran's southern Bushehr province. An earlier Israeli attack on South Pars saw Iran increasingly target Gulf Arab oil and natural gas sites.

Iran Guards ready plan for new order in Hormuz

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they are completing preparations to enforce new operating conditions in the Strait of Hormuz. "The IRGC naval force is completing operational preparations for the Iranian authorities' #declared_plan for the new Persian Gulf order," the Guards naval forces said in a post on X Sunday. They warned conditions in the strait "will never return to its former status, especially for the US and Israel." Oman's state news agency said on Sunday that Iran and Oman had held talks on easing passage through the strait.

US forces relocated on Kuwait's Bubiyan island

US forces located on Kuwait's Bubiyan island were targeted by Iran, the spokesperson of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said in a statement on Monday. Ebrahim Zolfaqari said Iran targeted satellite equipment and munitions on the island with drones, adding that US forces had relocated there from Arifjan camp after that base was repeatedly struck by Iran. Bubiyan island is the largest of Kuwait's coastal islands chain. Six people were injured from debris in northern Kuwait after an Iranian attack, Kuwait's health ministry said earlier. AGENCIES

WAR WOES

Lanka hikes cooking gas prices by 23%

Sri Lanka on Monday raised prices of LPG by nearly a quarter. As well as gas, Sri Lanka also imports all of its oil and buys coal for electricity generation. The increase in cooking gas prices on Monday is on top of an 8% hike last month. A private company, which accounts for about a quarter of the domestic LPG market, raised its retail price by 23% to 5,700 rupees ($18.08), up from 4,630 rupees ($14.69). The state-owned Litro Gas, the main supplier of LPG used in cooking stoves, increased the price of a 12.5-kg refill to 4,765 rupees ($15.62), up from 3,990 rupees — an increase of 19.42%. AFP

Indonesia raises jet fuel surcharge

Indonesia announced Monday a 28-percentage point rise in the surcharge on jet fuel, and said it will allow airlines to raise the domestic ticket price, which the govt caps, by up to 13%. Economy minister Airlangga Hartarto told reporters the jet fuel surcharge would rise from 10 to 38%, and the base ticket price between nine and 13%. Southeast Asia's low-cost carrier AirAsia X said it, too, was raising ticket prices and cutting routes. AFP

Pod save America: How Rogan is losing his 'josh' for Trump

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: A loose but influential coalition of American podcasters, digital commentators, and influencers that helped propel Donald Trump back to power in 2024 is showing visible signs of fracture, with several high-profile voices now openly questioning — even skewering — his presidency and its policies.

At the centre of this shift is Joe Rogan, whose show, The Joe Rogan Experience, remains one of the most powerful media platforms in the world, with close to 4 million views/downloads per episode. Rogan's late endorsement of Trump in 2024 was widely seen as a decisive boost, particularly among younger male voters who distrust traditional media, giving the 45th President an unfiltered channel to bypass mainstream outlets and speak directly to a politically disengaged demographic.

But in recent weeks, Rogan's tone has shifted. In a widely discussed episode last week, he suggested Trump may have launched the Iran war as a diversion from domestic scandals, calling aspects of the conflict "psychotic" and questioning its motives. He has also described Trump's actions as "so insane, based on what he ran on," capturing a sense of ideological betrayal felt by parts of his anti-war audience.

In a March episode, Rogan, referring to reports of a military commander who claimed Trump was "anointed by Jesus to cause Armageddon," explicitly called out "crackpot Christian nationalists" -an ironic come-to-Jesus moment for a man who has platformed some of the same wingnuts.

The disillusionment is not confined to Rogan. A cluster of podcasters in the Trump "manosphere" — including Theo Von and Andrew Schulz — have begun voicing disquiet about Trump's policies, especially the Iran conflict. On recent podcasts, they spoke of feeling "scared" about the administration's direction and questioned whether Trump had abandoned his anti-war and anti-establishment promises.

Criticism is also coming from ideological allies such as Tucker Carlson, whose podcast ranks among the most popular conservative programs in America. Carlson has accused Trump of betraying "America First" principles, calling the Iran war a strategic and moral error. In blunt terms, he described the military action as "absolutely disgusting and evil," marking one of the starkest breaks between Trump and a media ally.

Even within Trump-friendly media, fractures are widening. Megyn Kelly, host of The Megyn Kelly Show, has publicly split with the administration over the Iran conflict, questioning the rationale for US involvement, giving airtime to dissenting voices within national security establishment.

The growing unease is significant because these podcasters were not merely commentators — they were seen as kingmakers. Trump's 2024 campaign invested heavily in non-traditional media, appearing on podcasts and leveraging influencer networks rather than relying solely on legacy outlets. . This decentralised media strategy played a key role in mobilising new voters. But that same decentralisation is now working against Trump. Unlike party officials, influencers are accountable primarily to their audiences. As an analysis noted, their loyalty is "to their audiences rather than to central leadership," making the movement inherently unstable.

As cracks appear on the right, left-leaning podcasts have intensified their attacks on Trump. Podcasts like The Meidas Touch along with other progressive outlets such as Pod Save America and The Young Turks, have adopted an aggressive, rapid-response strategy — flooding social media with short, shareable clips attacking Trump's policies and amplifying dissent within his base.

For Trump, the emerging rift underscores the risks of relying on a personality-driven media ecosystem. Early signs suggest this could have political consequences. Trump's approval ratings have dipped amid the controversy, and unease among influential podcasters may signal deeper erosion within key voter blocs.

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL — SANDEEP ADHWARYU

Will only accept end of war with guarantee of no future attack: Iran

▶ Continued from P 1

Iran's IRNA state news agency said Tehran "has rejected a ceasefire and insists on the need for a definitive end to the conflict" in a message relayed to America via Pakistan. And yet, a regional official involved in talks said efforts had not collapsed. "We are still talking to both sides," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door diplomacy. Neither Trump nor IRNA named any specifics of the proposed ceasefire.

"We only accept an end of the war with guarantees that we won't be attacked again," Mojtaba Ferdousi Pour, head of the Iranian diplomatic mission in Cairo, told AP. Iran's military would "continue the war as long as the political authorities see fit", army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia said.

Reacting to the spate of US-Israeli attacks Monday, in which Iranian Guards' intelligence head was killed, supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei said 'assassinations and crimes" won't disrupt Iranian armed forces. The message was posted on Telegram. Trump's threat to bomb Iran into the "Stone Age" by destroying its infrastructure has alarmed many Americans who say such an action could amount to a war crime. Asked about this view, Trump justified his stand saying the Iranian regime had killed 45,000 people and while claiming the Iranian people "want to hear bombs go off as they want to be free."

Asked what he wanted to tell the Americans who were against the war (a clear majority), Trump said they are "foolish" because the objective was to deny Iran nuclear weapons, which he claims they would have had if he had not interceded.

Two MC-130J transport aircraft, serving as the mission's logistical backbone at a clandestine desert staging site, suffered what the Pentagon termed "cascading mechanical failures". To prevent the seizure of advanced communications and navigation arrays, US forces are reported to have executed a standard scuttling procedure, reducing the planes to burnt out shells before the final extraction team departed Iranian airspace.

The destruction of these assets denied Teheran a potent, outright propaganda victory – although Iran tried to make the best of it – but it also raised questions about the Pentagon's efficacy in terms of deployment of men and material. US military analysts meanwhile talked up the heroic feat of the stranded airman (who used the call sign "Dude 44 Alpha") who is said to have hidden in a mountain ridge 7,000 feet high after ejecting from an F-15 fighter jet brought down by Iran.

Early Monday, Iran issued a statement claiming their Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) "repelled a desperate American incursion", asserting they had shot down the aircraft and captured several "mercenaries". However, forensic satellite imagery and administration briefings suggest a more nuanced reality: the US aircraft were destroyed by their own crews, and all American personnel, including the rescued colonel and several wounded commandos, were reported to have been successfully evacuated to a military facility in Kuwait. Iran has not produced any personnel it claims to have captured.

The US rhetoric masks the financial cost of the operation. With the loss of two MC-130Js and the F-15E, the hardware cost of this rescue mission is estimated to exceed $400 million — which does not account for fuel, munitions, or the massive carrier-based support.

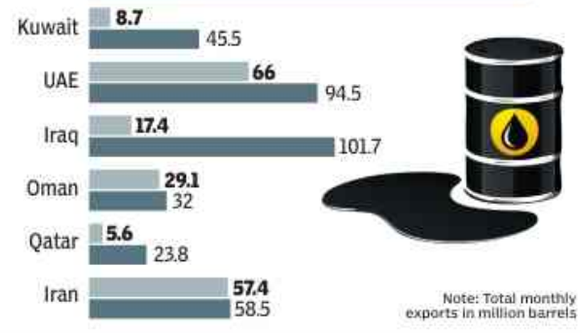
With input from agencies

HOW HORMUZ CLOSURE IS DIVIDING FORTUNES OF GULF COUNTRIES

The Strait of Hormuz's closure and the resulting surge in global oil prices have handed **financial windfalls to Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia**, while other states that lack alternative shipment routes have lost billions of dollars, a Reuters analysis found. Iran later said it would allow transits by vessels that had no US or Israeli links. As a result, some tankers have managed to cross the narrow waterway, but energy markets have still experienced unprecedented disruption

MOST GULF OIL EXPORTS HIT

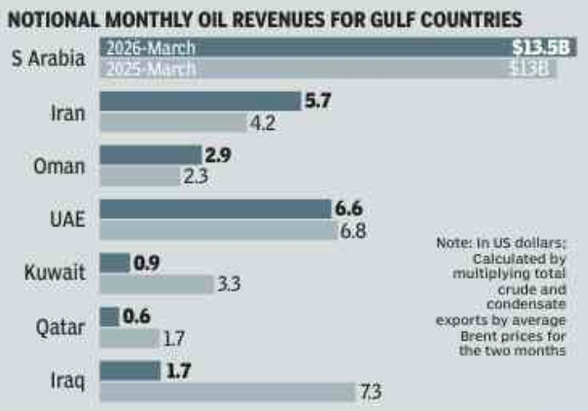
Crude exports from most Gulf countries have fallen in March



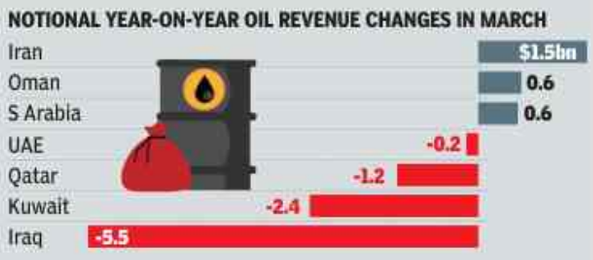
IRAQ SUFFERS BIGGEST REVENUE DROP

- The Reuters analysis of March export data found Iraq and Kuwait's estimated notional oil export revenues both plunged by about three-quarters year-on-year. Conversely, **Iran's revenues rose by 37% and Oman's by 26%.** Saudi Arabia's oil revenues increased by 4.3%, while the UAE's dipped by 2.6% as the price surge offset lower volumes
- UAE has been shielded to an extent by its 1.5-1.8 million barrels per day (bpd). Habshan-Fujairah pipeline, which bypasses the Hormuz Strait. Its estimated oil export value still fell by more than $174 million year-on-year in March. Fujairah has come under a series of attacks
- **Iraq's revenue fell the most, plunging by 76% to $1.73 billion.** Iraq's state oil marketer SOMO said on April 2 March oil revenues were about $2 billion, close to Reuters' estimate. A tanker laden with Iraqi crude sailed through the Strait last week after Iran said Iraq would be exempt from restrictions

NOTIONAL MONTHLY OIL REVENUES FOR GULF COUNTRIES



NOTIONAL YEAR-ON-YEAR OIL REVENUE CHANGES IN MARCH



Note: In US dollars, based on total crude and condensate export data and average Brent crude futures of $99.60 a barrel in March 2026 and $71.47 in March 2025

SAUDI GETS HIGHER ROYALTIES AND TAXES

For Saudi Arabia, **higher prices mean increased royalties and taxes from oil giant Aramco, which is overwhelmingly owned by govt.** The uplift is positive for the kingdom following heavy spending on projects designed to diversify its income away from oil. Aramco declined to comment when asked about Reuters' calculations. Saudi Arabia crude exports fell 26% year-on-year in March to 4.39 million bpd, Kpler and JODI data showed. Still, higher prices increased the value of those exports by roughly $558 million from a year earlier. Riyadh had pre-emptively boosted exports in Feb to their highest since April 2023, in case of a US attack on Iran

Source: Reuters

Trump: Will jail journo who first reported on airman

Washington: Trump threatened to jail the journalist who first reported that US forces were searching for an F-15 weapons officer shot down in Iran, if they don't reveal their sources. "The person that did the story will go to jail if he doesn't say, and that doesn't last long," Trump said. Trump didn't name the journalist or news organisation. He said the leak tipped off the Iranians, endangering the officer and his rescuers. He called the leaker "a sick person."

The president described the scale of the operation undertaken by the US to rescue the second airman from the downed aircraft — which included 155 aircraft. More specifically, it included four bombers, 64 fighters, 48 refuelling tankers, and 13 rescue aircraft, among others, Trump said.

Much of it was an effort to throw off the Iranians, who were also looking for the missing crew member, the president said. "We were bringing them all over and a lot of it was subterfuge," Trump said. "We wanted to have them think he was in a different location."

US tried to arm Iran protesters, but lost weapons, says prez

Trump also said that the US attempted to arm Iranian protesters but the weapons were diverted and never passed to the right people. Trump said the armaments were meant to help anti-govt protesters fight back against the authorities.

"We sent guns, a lot of guns, they were supposed to go to the people so they could fight back against these thugs," Trump told reporters while at a White House Easter event. "You know what happened? The people that they sent them to kept them," Trump went on, adding: "So I'm very upset with a certain group of people, and they're going to pay a big price for that." Trump did not give details about who he was accusing of taking the US weapons. However, on Sunday, Trump was quoted as saying by a Fox News reporter that he blamed Kurdish intermediaries for having taken the weapons. AFP

Iran: US airman rescue possibly cover to 'steal enriched uranium'

Tehran: Iran's foreign ministry said on Monday that a US operation to rescue a downed airman may have been a cover to "steal enriched uranium" from the Islamic republic. Iran's military has called it "a deception and escape mission", insisting it was "completely foiled".

On Monday, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said there were "many questions and uncertainties" about the operation. "The area where the American pilot was claimed to be present in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province is a long way from the area where they attempted to land or wanted to land their forces in central Iran," Baqaei said. "The possibility that this was a deception operation to steal enriched uranium should not be ignored at all."

Iran said several US aircraft had to "make emergency landings" in Isfahan province after being hit. AFP

Artemis astronauts travel further into space than any human: Nasa

Houston: With the moon now filling their windows, the Artemis II astronauts set a record Monday as the farthest humans from Earth during a lunar flyby promising magnificent views of the far side never before witnessed.

The six-hour flyby is the highlight of Nasa's first return to the moon since the Apollo era with three Americans and one Canadian — a step toward landing boot prints near the moon's south pole in just two years. First came a prize — and bragging rights — for Artemis II.

Less than an hour before kicking off the fly-around and intense lunar observations, the four astronauts surpassed the distance record of 400,171km set by Apollo 13 in April 1970. They kept going, hurtling ever farther from Earth. Before it was all over, Mission Control expected Artemis II to beat the old record by more than 6,600km.

AP

Moon as seen from Orion spacecraft

The astronauts woke up to the voice of Apollo 13 commander Jim Lovell, who recorded the message just two months before his death last August. "Welcome to my old neighbourhood," said Lovell, who also flew on Apollo 8, humanity's first lunar visit. "It's a historic day and I know how busy you'll be, but don't forget to enjoy the view." They took up with them the Apollo 8 silk patch that accompanied Lovell to the moon, and showed it off as the crucial flyby approached. "It's just a real honour to have that on board with us," said commander Reid Wiseman. "Let's go have a great day."

Artemis II is using the same maneuver that Apollo 13 did. Known as a free-return lunar trajectory, this no-stopping-to-land route takes advantage of Earth and the moon's gravity, reducing the need for fuel. It's a celestial figure-eight that will put the astronauts on course for home, once they emerge from behind the moon Monday evening. Astronauts were on track to pass as close as 6,550km to the moon, as their Orion capsule whips past it, hangs a U-turn and then heads back toward Earth. It will take them four days to get back, with a splashdown in the Pacific concluding their test flight on Friday. AP

US SC gives nod to junk case against Trump ex-adviser

Washington: The US Supreme Court cleared the way on Monday for the justice department to move forward with dismissing a criminal case in which **Steve Bannon**, an influential ally of President Trump, was convicted after defying a congressional subpoena.

The justices threw out a lower court's decision to uphold Bannon's 2022 conviction for refusing to testify before a panel that probed the attack on US Capitol. In 2024, after the Supreme Court denied Bannon's request to keep him out of jail, he served a four-month sentence. Supreme Court returned the case to the lower court for further consideration "in light of the pending motion to dismiss the indictment." REUTERS

Japan's bereaved family sues over 'hostage justice'

Tokyo: The family of a wrongfully arrested Japanese man who died while in prolonged pre-trial detention sued the state Monday, seeking to hold judges accountable for repeatedly denying him bail. This is the latest in a series of lawsuits challenging Japan's criminal justice system that critics say doesn't always presume innocence and relies heavily on coerced confessions.

In March 2020, Japanese authorities arrested three executives of machinery maker Ohkawara Kakohki for allegedly exporting to China industrial spray dryers deemed convertible to military equipment. During months-long investigations and detention of the trio, one of them, Shizuo Aishima, was denied bail repeatedly despite being diagnosed with cancer.

Eleven months into his detention, the engineer died at age 72. A few months after his death, prosecutors dropped the case, including against the other two defendants. "My husband mumbled to me from his cell, 'is this really the way a human being should be treated?,'" his widow, who is withholding her name for privacy concerns, said.

With her and her two sons as its plaintiffs, the case argues 37 judges who kept warranting his detention were complicit in so-called "hostage justice". "Hostage justice" is a term popularised by ex-Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn's months-long, 2018-2019 detention. Campaigners say lengthy pre-trial confinement is meted out easily in Japan and that unless suspects confess, judges are unlikely to grant bail. Aishima's family is seeking $1.1 million in damages. AFP

Hasina non-existent in our political landscape: Dhaka

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: Former PM **Sheikh Hasina** no longer holds any relevance in Bangladesh's political landscape, Dhaka said on Monday, ahead of foreign minister Khalilur Rahman two-day "goodwill trip" to India, beginning Tuesday. Bangladesh has requested the extradition of Hasina, who fled to India on Aug 5, 2024, amid protests against her govt.

"It's a new relationship between Bangladesh and India. There is nothing like Hasina's Awami League in Bangladesh now. Hasina is non-existent. She died politically long days ago," Bangladesh PM's foreign affairs adviser Humaiun Kobir told reporters after a meeting between PM Tarique Rahman and Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma. Emphasising the importance of strengthening people-to-people ties with India, "stepping out from one-person-centric relations", he said sustained openness and candid dialogue between the two sides could help address "several longstanding challenges".

In his meeting with Rahman, in which Khalilur was also present, Verma conveyed to the Bangladesh PM that India is willing to rebuild ties with Dhaka with a "forward-looking approach". Verma also conveyed that "India's intent to work together with the govt and people of Bangladesh by adopting a positive, constructive and forward-looking approach and based on mutual interest and mutual benefit".

"DEVDUTT'S PLAYING CRICKETING SHOTS AND HITTING THE BALL WITH DISTANCE. IF HE CONTINUES BATTING LIKE THIS, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO KEEP HIM OUT OF THE INDIAN TEAM FOR LONG. HE HAS SCORED HEAVILY IN DOMESTIC CRICKET. HE'S A QUALITY PLAYER."
—Dinesh Karthik | RCB mentor

That Is The Question On Minds Of Mumbai Indians As Pandya Rejoins Practice Ahead Of Game vs Royals

WILL HE? WON'T HE?

Sourav.M@timesofindia.com

Guwahati: It's still early days in the season, but Rajasthan Royals and Mumbai Indians head into Tuesday's clash at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium on contrasting notes.

The Royals have built early momentum with back-to-back wins, while the five-time champions are searching for consistency after a six-wicket loss to Delhi Capitals, following a dominant opening victory over Kolkata Knight Riders.

Rajasthan began their campaign with a crushing win over Chennai Super Kings at their adopted home in Guwahati and followed it up with a nervy but smart victory over Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad. Defending just 15 runs in the final two overs to seal a six-run win in the last game, the Riyan Parag-led side is brimming with confidence and will look to continue its winning run in its second outing here.

Mumbai, meanwhile, will be keen on the return of captain Hardik Pandya, who missed the previous match due to viral fever. With India T20 skipper Suryakumar Yadav stepping in as stand-in captain against Delhi, MI had to reshuffle their combination and looked slightly unsettled.

Pandya has since rejoined training and is expected to return to the XI, though he skipped Monday's session after practising on Sunday. MI bowling coach Paras Mhambrey sounded optimistic at the pre-match press conference.

"Yes, he will be available for the game. He hit the nets for a couple of hours yesterday. He is fit and fine. He was not injured, just unwell," Mhambrey said.

Pandya's absence forced MI to bring in South African allrounder Corbin Bosch as a like-for-like replacement, while Trent Boult made way. Deepak Chahar delivered a tidy spell, but Bosch failed to make an impact, leaving MI's bowling combination lacking balance.

Bumrah still to pick a wicket

Jasprit Bumrah has been economical as ever but is yet to pick up a wicket this season, while Mitchell Santner has done well to hold on to his place. The MI attack, however, faces a stiff challenge against Rajasthan's in-form batting unit.

Explosive openers Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Yashasvi Jaiswal have provided strong starts, with Dhruv Jurel steady at No. 3. Parag and Shimron Hetmyer are yet to get significant time in the middle. Still, their presence adds depth to the line-up.

Parag, in particular, will take confidence from his calm leadership against Gujarat, where his smart bowling changes helped Tushar Deshpande defend 11 runs in the final over. With Jofra Archer and Nadre Burger sharing the new ball effectively, the Royals look well-balanced.

Mumbai, however, possess enough firepower in Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma to turn things around, setting up a contest where momentum meets experience.

"I DON'T THINK ANYONE DOUBTED ROHIT. I DON'T THINK HIS PERFORMANCE IS A BONUS. WE LOOK AT IT IN TERMS OF WHAT HE BRINGS TO THE TABLE, OTHER THAN THE CRICKET AS WELL. IT'S THE EXPERTISE, THE EXPERIENCE, THE CHAT ON THE FIELD WITH THE BOWLERS, WITH THE BATTERS. I THINK HE ADDS A LOT OF VALUE."
— PARAS MHAMBREY | MI bowling coach

Cremas

MAIN MAN: Mi will hope their captain Hardik Pandya will be fit vs RR

WEATHER
20°C

NUMBERS GAME

19 Jasprit Bumrah, with 19 wickets at 19.36 runs apiece in 15 matches, is the top wicket-taker in MI vs RR matches.

173.28 Strike rate of Hardik Pandya while amassing 506 runs at an average of 72.28, including two fifties, in 15 innings (eight not outs) for Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Titans. It's the highest among batters with 500 runs or more vs Rajasthan Royals.

5 Five hundreds have been scored by Rajasthan Royals vs Mumbai Indians in the IPL — two by Yashasvi Jaiswal and one each by Jos Buttler, Yusuf Pathan and Ben Stokes. Jaiswal's career-best 124 off 62 balls at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai, on April 23, 2023, remains the highest in games involving the two teams.

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
PBKS	3	2	0	0.637	5
RCB	2	2	0	2.501	4
RR	2	2	0	2.233	4
DC	2	2	0	1.170	4
SRH	3	1	2	0.275	2
MI	2	1	1	-0.206	2
LSG	2	1	1	-0.542	2
KKR	3	0	2	-1.964	1
GT	2	0	2	-0.424	0
CSK	3	0	3	-2.517	0

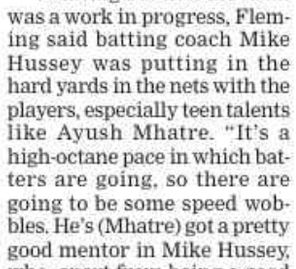
*PBKS & KKR SHARED A POINT

TIME TO ASK APOLLO AI
PRESSURE
1 in 3 Indians has BP risk—a leading cause of serious health issues.
Scan to manage your BP levels
For any Health Query Chat with
Ask Apollo AI
Apollo All Clinical excellence for healthier India
Apollo 247

'Give him time to connect with team'

CSK Coach Fleming Says Samson, Who Is Yet To Fire This Season, Is Eager To Contribute

Manuja.Veerappa@timesofindia.com



Bengaluru: After a stint as a player with Chennai Super Kings, New Zealand stalwart Stephen Fleming has spent the bulk of his time in the dugout as head coach. Since taking charge in 2009, he has mostly overseen the franchise's evolution through peaks and troughs, from title-winning highs to lean phases.

The last couple of seasons, in particular, have tested the five-time champions, with back-to-back failures to progress beyond the league stage. Their auction strategy and team selections have repeatedly come under scrutiny.

Yet, Fleming remains confident the team is going through a transitional phase. This year saw the entry of star wicketkeeper-batter **Sanju Samson**, who played an instrumental role in India's T20 World Cup win but is yet to fire for CSK this season. Barring a lone season with Delhi Capitals, Samson had previously spent all IPL career with Rajasthan Royals. But three matches into the season, he has scored a total of only 22 runs.

The underwhelming returns notwithstanding, Fleming backed the opener, insisting he needs time to settle into a new setup. "It's difficult when you've been at a franchise for some time and even though he probably feels pretty comfortable, there's still an element of belonging and he's going through the process of connecting with this team. There's a little bit of work to be done off the field that we're doing just that to make the bonds a bit tighter, but he's fine. He's fitted in really well. He's desperate for some runs and to contribute along with the senior players," Fleming said.

Following a 43-run defeat to RCB at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, questions about the side's ability to click as a cohesive unit have resurfaced. "You can see the talent, but you also have to accept there are going to be mistakes," Fleming said, adding, "There's huge talent and going forward it's going to be a really good core of Indian players, batters in particular. You're going to get a little bit of inconsistency from some of the young players, but you're also going to get some brilliance."

Pointing out that the team was a work in progress, Fleming said batting coach Mike Hussey was putting in the hard yards in the nets with the players, especially teen talents like Ayush Mhatre. "It's a high-octane pace in which batters are going, so there are going to be some speed wobbles. He's (Mhatre) got a pretty good mentor in Mike Hussey, who, apart from being a good batting coach, has a great understanding of the game," the 53-year-old said.

PTI

SMALL JOY: PBKS skipper Shreyas Iyer and pacer Xavier Bartlett celebrate the dismissal of KKR's Cameron Green on Monday

KKR get off the mark thanks to heavy rain

Archiman.Bhaduri@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: Lightning struck twice at Eden Gardens on Monday as the IPL clash between Kolkata Knight Riders and Punjab Kings was washed out for the second successive season due to heavy showers, leaving both teams to share a point.

The hosts wouldn't mind the abandonment too much as it helped them open their account after back-to-back defeats. Punjab, however, may feel short-changed after reducing Kolkata to 25/2 in just 3.4 overs before rain stopped play at 7.47pm. Though showers relented around 10.30pm, conditions didn't allow even a five-over contest.

Punjab pacer Xavier Bartlett made an immediate impact, striking twice in his opening two overs. The Australian removed Finn Allen and Cameron Green with probing outswingers, both edging to wicketkeeper Prabhsimran Singh, as Kolkata slipped to 16/2 before rain interrupted proceedings.

Despite the dodgy forecast, Kolkata skipper Ajinkya Rahane's decision to bat first after winning the toss raised eyebrows. Searching for momentum after a slow start to the season, the Knight Riders opted for a bold shake-up, leaving out key spinners Varun Chakravarthy and Sunil Narine due to injury and illness respectively.

It was the first time since 2019 that both were left out together. Kolkata fielded only one specialist spinner in Anukul Roy and handed pacer Navdeep Saini a debut. Rovman Powell, drafted in for Narine, also didn't get a chance to take the field.

DAVID REDISCOVERS HIS GROOVE

After Injuries & A Lean Run Of Form, RCB's Aussie Finisher Announced His Presence In Style Against CSK

Manuja.Veerappa@timesofindia.com

Syed Asif

Bengaluru: The scoring sequence — 6, 2, 4, 6, 6, 6 — was enough to seal CSK's fate. This was what RCB's **Tim David** unleashed on pacer Jamie Overton in the 19th over. Off the 19 sixes struck by five RCB batters on Sunday night, the towering Australian accounted for eight.

The 30-year-old finisher shrugged off a testing few months to light up the M Chinnaswamy Stadium and start his IPL season in style.

POWER PACKED

Playing for Hobart Hurricanes in the Big Bash League, David had been ruled out on Dec 26 last year with a Grade 2 right hamstring strain. He returned for the T20 World Cup but made little impact as Australia made a hasty exit. David only had scores of 0 and 6 against Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka to show.

After a modest, unbeaten 16 off 10 balls in the season opener against SRH, he exploded against CSK, raising both tempo and temperature on a muggy night. The unbeaten 70 off 25 balls powered the defending champions to a 43-run win, but more than the result, it was a masterclass in clean, calculated power-hitting.

Walking in with 35 balls remaining, David was kept quiet for six deliveries before he decided to launch the onslaught. RCB skipper Rajat Patidar, who had been striking fluently, stepped back and watched the assault unfold, later calling David "one of the best finishers I have seen".

A lifeline came when David, on 28, was bowled off a no-ball by Anshul Kamboj, a moment CSK would come to rue. Head coach Stephen Fleming admitted the margin for error against a hitter like David was minimal.

"Against a hitter like Tim David, who is very destructive, you've got to be absolutely spot on. Once we fell behind, he got his rhythm. There are really small margins and with a good hitter like David, we've got to be more exact than that. So we missed where we needed to be and we got hurt in the hardest fashion," Fleming said.

David, who has been routinely targeting the stands during nets, sent one 106 metres into the roof and later joked, "I've been getting into trouble during training with the boys. We have competitions to try and hit them on the roof and we're obviously on the side pitches. So, to get one during a match out of the middle, help it up on the roof, it was good fun."

He credited his preparation and batting coach Dinesh Karthik for the clarity in approach. "We do a lot of preparation. It's nice to work with DK. He is an experienced player in these conditions and has been in the IPL for many years. With that prep, you don't put pressure on yourself to perform," David said.

At the other end of the spectrum, Devdutt Padikkal has been providing early impetus at the top. The left-hander, who registered his second successive half-century, admitted there was much to learn from David's approach.

"I wish I could hit anywhere close to what he hits like," Padikkal said. "But just looking at the technique that he has, you can try and pick up things. It's all about self-belief."

Bowlers haven't cracked Powerplay code yet: Jamieson

Prasanth.Menon@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The ongoing IPL season has opened with a run deluge. Close to 4,000 runs have been scored and bowlers have been bearing the brunt, forcing them to find way and means to survive. Delhi Capitals' Kiwi seamer **Kyle Jamieson** admits his tribe has been finding it extremely difficult to stop the marauding batsmen.

"How do you get guys out and slow them down in the Powerplay? It feels like teams are going hard in the Powerplay and setting up games from there. I don't think anyone (bowlers) has fully cracked it unless the wicket offers something," the 31-year-old said.

Jamieson also joined a growing list of cricketers who are not in favour of the 'Impact Player' rule in IPL. "I think it (Impact Player rule) takes some skill out of the game. If you can bat deep, you don't need the same level of batting skill as before. It also affects the role of allrounders. You don't see it in many other formats or leagues, probably for a reason," he said.

However, the tall, well-built pacer from Auckland also feels that the key for bowlers is to back their strengths.

How Shami's sleight of hand conned Travi-Shek in Hyderabad

Vishal.Menon@timesofindia.com

Kochi: Sunrisers Hyderabad traded **Mohammed Shami** to Lucknow Super Giants for Rs 10 crore before this season. On Sunday, he repaid them with interest, ripping out Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma in the Powerplay with skill and deception.

Shami began over the wicket to Head, a line that hinted at predictability. The Australian, expecting the ball to shape away, set up accordingly. Instead, the first three deliveries jagged back in: tight and invasive, cramping him for room. By the fourth, when Shami finally sent one across on a perfect length, Head was content to nudge it to get off strike.

Against Sharma, the bluff took shape. Shami shifted deep third man to deep point, hinting at width outside off. Shami, however, bowled a searing yorker, spearing at Sharma's leg stump. Then came the flourish. In the final ball of the opening over, another fielder was pushed to the off side, reinforcing the idea of width. Shami bowl ed wide, but it was a cutter. Sharma, through with the short early, was caught at short third for a duck. The hook was baited.

The pacer wasn't finished. He returned the next over with another vicious cutter. Head, still recalibrating, pressed forward awkwardly. His bottom hand slipped, and the ball looped toward mid-off. Aiden Markram took a sharp catch. Two wickets. 18 dot balls. Figures of 2/9 and the Player-of-the-Match award. "If he keeps bowling like this, it will be difficult for the selectors to ignore him," former India pacer Sanjeev Sharma told **TOI**. "Play him in the Afghanistan series. But like a dent in a car, you have to handle it with care. His body needs to be managed." At 35, Shami knows it better than anyone.

'Tennis is tough, find your why & stick to it!'

How Breakdown Fuelled Erin's Breakthrough...

Sabi.Hussain@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Two-time US Open doubles champion and former World No. 1 **Erin Routliffe** had a turbulent 2023, marked by eight consecutive defeats and a mental breakdown. She returned to claim two US Open doubles titles and reach the Wimbledon doubles final in 2024, while taking inspiration from sister Tess, a decorated para swimmer. *Excerpts from an interview...*

You faced a first-round loss at Wimbledon in 2019. Can you take us through that?

That loss was tough. But ultimately it made me stronger at the end of the day. It's something that I learned a lot from. I always say every loss teaches you something. I brought that into my experience in Slams for years after.

You stepped away from tennis for nearly six months after that...

I wasn't enjoying it. I thought ultimately you want to be happy and so I gave up. But somewhere inside me I wanted to leave the sport in a positive way. I didn't think I was going to come back to tennis, but I missed it after a couple of months. So thankfully, I returned with a different mindset.

In 2023, you suffered a mental breakdown. Take us through that time period.

It was definitely a massive life moment for me. I couldn't have done it without Bruce (coach Lipka). Lot of people in the background helped. I was 28 that time. It was very tough but people around me supported and believed in me. I think it all came into that one moment and the only thing I felt really was joy.

Many athletes go through similar struggles. What's your advice for them?

I would say 'find your why and kind of stick to that'! Tennis is such a tough sport. You are alone a lot, and you don't have many people around you most of the time unless you are at the top of your sport. I think that's what is remarkable about this sport is you grind for so many years to get there. So, just keep going, keep fighting and make sure you find what makes you happy.

Tell us about your sister Tess and her influence in your journey...

Tess has inspired me since she was little. I watched her go to the pool at 4 am for practice. I have always been envious of her and her ability to work really hard all the time. I am her big sister but she inspires me in so many ways. We both were in Paris (Olympics 2024), she was there a month after. But if we could both be in the Los Angeles (Games 2028), that would be really fun.

How have your preparations been for the BJK Cup?

The preparations have been pretty good. I have been playing more matches and have become a full-timer on tour. So, I play a lot of tennis. I think we can beat any team here. It's all really close. I am confident about our chances.

India face Thailand in BJK Cup opener

Sabi.Hussain@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: India begin their campaign in the Billie Jean King (BJK) Cup Asia/Oceania Group I tie against Thailand here on Tuesday, aiming to secure a World Group playoffs spot for the third time in six years.

The home challenge will be spearheaded by veterans Ankita Raina and Rutuja Bhosale with Vaishnavi Adkar, Sahaja Yamalappalli and Zeel Desai completing the line-up. Zeel joined the squad at the last minute following injuries to Shrivalli Bhamidipaty and Vaidehee Chaudhari. Former Davis Cupper and Asian Games medallist Vishaal Uppal will captain the side.

TENNIS

The Asia/Oceania Group I tie will follow a round-robin format, with participating teams facing each other. Only the top two teams will advance to the 2026 World Group playoffs.

"Our practice sessions went off well, and everyone seemed to be in good form and in a good state of mind. The team is physically and mentally ready to battle it out for the next five days and hopefully qualify for the playoffs again. We have good depth in the squad, and all the girls have been working hard and playing well. The mixture of youth and experience is very valuable to the team, and we are hoping that everyone remains fit and healthy, physically and mentally, and we can fight our hearts out this week in this edition," Uppal told TOI.

Anushka Kogta

CONFIDENT BUNCH: Vishal Uppal (left) and Rutuja Bhosale in Delhi on Monday

"A couple of teams have excellent players," Uppal said, adding that every match would be hard-fought.

"New Zealand is very strong with Lulu Sun and Erin Routliffe. Indonesia is strong with Janice Tjen and Aldila in doubles. South Koreans always have a good deep squad which makes them a big challenge. Thailand is a very good team, and we cannot take Mongolia lightly either. It's going to be a very tough and hard-fought group. I hope we can bring out our best and qualify." India's first appearance in the playoffs came in 2021 under the leadership of Sania Mirza. After finishing second behind China in the regional group event, India faced Latvia in an away tie in Jurmala but went down 3-1. The team replicated the feat last year, again finishing second — this time behind New Zealand — to qualify for the playoffs.

However, playing at home in Bengaluru, India endured a tough outing, losing both their ties against Slovenia (2-1) and the Netherlands (3-0).

SNAP SHOTS

ADITI FINISHES T-27

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok carded a three-over 75 in her final round to finish tied 27th at the Aramco Championship in Las Vegas, ending the week with an overall total of eight-over par. She had earlier returned rounds of 74, 71 and 76 in the first three days. Pranavi Urs carded a four-over 76 to finish tied 66th with a total of 17-over par (76-75-78-76), while Avani Prashanth returned a five-over 77 to end the week in 73rd position with an overall score of 21-over par (75-76-81-77).

RIT men triumph: Ramaiah Institute of Technology (RIT), Bengaluru won the men's title at the All India Inter-Collegiate basketball championship. In the final, RIT defeated hosts BITS, Goa 60-48. In the women's final, RIT lost to LSR, New Delhi 37-40. **Results (final): Men:** RIT 60 (Kanishka 22, Pranesh 13, Dhruva 12) bt BITS Goa 48 (Niel 18, Prathik 14). **Women:** LSR, Delhi 40 (Aanavi 22) bt RIT 37 (Nakshatra 15, Aadhya Aital 10).

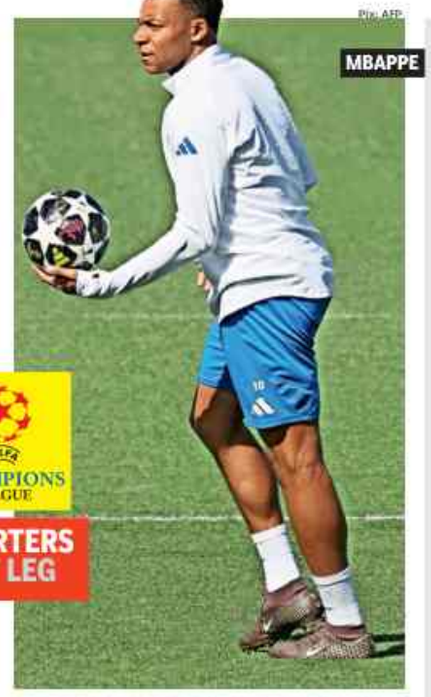
Karnataka prevail: Karnataka scored a commanding 6-1 win over Gujarat in a Pool B (division B) match at the Hockey India sub junior women's national championship in Ranchi on Monday. KP Sinchana (20, 52), M M Thaniya (2), SM Kusumanjali (19), Pretti Neelaraddi (22) and Huggennavar Basamma (26) were the goalscorers for Karnataka.

Karthik, Vinish shine: Karthik and Vinish scored two goals each as Ideal Sports Academy defeated Primrose Hockey Club 5-2 in the KSHA 'B' Division hockey league championship in Bengaluru on Monday. **Result:** Ideal Sports Academy 5 (Karthik 2, 22; Vinish 23, 36; Ajay 43) bt Primrose HC 0.

Today's matches: Ashco HC vs Garuda HC (1.15 pm), Bangalore Friends HC vs Ideal SA (2.45 pm).

REAL'S BAYERN THREAT

Fit-Again Mbappe Likely To Feature Alongside Vinicius In Attack As Formidable Munich Club Visits



Pix: AFP

Madrid: Real Madrid manager Alvaro Arbeloa expects his side to rise to the occasion when they host Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal at the Bernabeu on Tuesday looking to rebound from a damaging league defeat.

Real's LaLiga title hopes took a hit on Saturday after a 2-1 loss away to relegation-threatened Mallorca, leaving them seven points adrift of leaders Barcelona in the table. "I told them there was no time to dwell on what had happened," Arbeloa told reporters on Monday. "All we're thinking about is winning tomorrow."

Fit once more, Arbeloa indicated Mbappe was likely to feature along with Vinicius in attack.

Real face a stern test against Vincent Kompany's Bayern, who are nine points clear at the top of the Bundesliga and finished second in the Champions League league phase, suffering just one defeat.

"They're aggressive in defence, they're brave, they mark their men very closely, they drop back at tremendous speed, with intensity, and with the pace they bring to the game," Arbeloa said. "They're a very well-rounded team."

Arbeloa, however, is confident that Real's pedigree on Europe's biggest stage will again come to the fore. "A Madrid side that has always stood up to top-class opponents," the Spaniard added.

"We're up against a team that's the most consistent in Europe and will really test us. Our history against this opponent is special. I'm sure we're in for a great night, just like against Manchester City."

Real cruised into the quarters with a dominant 5-1 aggregate victory over City.

> **"BAYERN ARE FEARLESS AND AGGRESSIVE, VERY FOCUSED DEFENSIVELY, WITH ANOTHER UNBELIEVABLE STRIKER IN HARRY KANE."** —Alvaro Arbeloa | REAL COACH

Bayern Munich striker Harry Kane practised on Monday and is expected to be available. Kane missed Bayern's win over Freiburg in the Bundesliga on Saturday because of a minor ankle issue sustained in training with England last week.

He took part in the team's training session in Munich before the squad travelled to the Spanish capital for Tuesday's match at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium. "He is a goal scorer. He is a great player," Madrid forward Vinicius said Monday about Kane. "But Bayern have many players who switch positions and make it difficult for us."

Arsenal face test of character vs Sporting

London: Mikel Arteta has urged shell-shocked Arsenal to embrace a major test of their character as they seek to recover from a pair of devastating defeats in the quarterfinal at Sporting Lisbon. Arteta's side suffered a shock 2-1 defeat at second tier Southampton in the FA Cup quarterfinals on Saturday, a fortnight after losing 2-0 to Manchester City in the League Cup final.

Arteta knows Arsenal are in a strong position, travelling to Lisbon as favourites to dispatch Sporting. "What they have done for nine months, I'm not going to criticise them because we lost a game in the manner that they are putting their bodies through everything," Arteta said.

Arsenal's Swedish striker Viktor Gyokeres formerly played for the Portuguese club. AGENCIES

REAL VS BAYERN OVER THE YEARS

28 No two teams have met as often in UEFA competition as Real Madrid and Bayern, with the sides facing each other 28 times – all in the European Cup/Champions League. The Spanish side lead the head to head with 13 wins to Bayern's 11, along with four draws.

41 Real Madrid are competing in the European Cup/Champions League quarterfinals for a record 41st time, with Bayern second on the all-time list as they make their 36th appearance at this stage. However, in the Champions League era it is Bayern who lead the way with 24 quarterfinal appearances compared to Real Madrid's 22.

4 Real Madrid have won the last four UEFA two-legged ties between the sides, most recently a 4-3 aggregate victory in the 2023/24 Champions League semi-finals. They have also won all of the three previous European Cup/Champions League quarterfinal ties between the clubs (1987/88, 2001/02 and 2016/17).

9 The Merengues are unbeaten in their last nine UEFA matches against Bayern (W7 D2) and their last eight against them at home (W7 D1).

2 Harry Kane, who has 14 goals in his last 13 Champions League games, has scored in the away leg of Bayern's quarterfinal tie in each of the last two seasons in this competition — against Arsenal in 2023/24 and Inter in 2024/25.

FREE KICKS

Lautaro brace helps Inter Milan win, get title pursuit back on track

Milan: Lautaro Martinez is back from injury, and Inter Milan is back looking like the Serie A leader again. Lautaro scored twice in his first action since February and Inter routed visiting Roma 5-2 on Sunday to end a four-match winless streak across all competitions. Lautaro scored in the second and 52nd minutes at the San Siro. Hakan Calhanoglu - fresh off helping Turkey qualify for the World Cup - Marcus Thuram and Nicolo Barella also found the net for Inter. Inter moved nine points ahead of AC Milan and 10 ahead of defending champions Napoli.

Bernardo Silva to exit City at end of season

Manchester: Manchester City captain Bernardo Silva will leave the club at the end of the season, assistant manager Pep Lijnders confirmed on Sunday. The 31-year-old Portugal international, who has won six Premier League titles and the Champions League during a nine-year spell at the Etihad Stadium, will depart as a free agent when his contract expires after the campaign concludes.

Leeds reach FA Cup semis for first time since 1987

London: Leeds threw away a two-goal lead in second-half injury time and had a double scare in extra time before going on to beat West Ham in a penalty shootout on Sunday and reach the FA Cup semifinals for the first time since 1987. Southampton, meanwhile, will face Manchester City in the semifinals at Wembley after beating Arsenal. AGENCIES

India eye strong show

Granada (Spain): Indian shooters will look to assert themselves as a strong force when the Rifle/Pistol World Cup gets underway here on Tuesday with the 10m air rifle and air pistol events set to open the competition, though the challenge is expected to be formidable given the depth and quality of the accomplished field. In the pistol event, Asian Games champion Palak Gulia will team up with 2024 junior world champion in 25m pistol, Mukesh Nelavalli, while

SHOOTING

2025 World Cup Finals silver medallist Sainyam will partner Ujjawal Malik.

They will be up against a formidable field featuring Olympic and world champions, including the Chinese contingent, which skipped the Asian Championships in New Delhi this year but have fielded two world-class pairings. Reigning mixed team world champions Hu Kai and Yao Qianxun and Paris Olympics gold medallist Xie Yu along with 21-year-old former Junior World Championships medallist Shen Yiyao will pose the biggest challenge to the field. PTI

Sindarov set for an encore; Muzychuk in charge

Amit.Sampat@timesofindia.com

Nagpur: World Cup winner Javokhir Sindarov is four wins and three draws away from winning the Candidates in Cyprus.

With five wins, two draws and six points from seven games, Uzbekistan's 20-year-old youngest Candidate has already achieved the best score at the halfway mark of the tournament since the eight-player double round-robin format was adopted in 2013.

Even if Sindarov splits the points in the next seven games, he will match the best ever score of the tournament, which Ian Nepomniachtchi achieved to win the 2022 Candidates, collecting 9.5 points from 14 rounds.

In his Candidates debut, the way Sindarov delivered in the first half, the change of ends against the seven remaining Candidates looks like a cakewalk for the youngest winner of the chess World Cup in Goa six months ago.

While the veteran of the Candidates tournament Fabiano Caruana is following Sindarov at 4.5 points, India's Praggnanandhaa R and seasoned Dutch GM Anish Giri are holding on to joint third position with 3.5 points. If the trio of Caruana, Pragg and Giri garner a full point against Sindarov with some luck from the other four, then the open field will look like a battlefield.

In his post-game interview with Saint Louis Chess Club after he drew with Pragg, Caruana said he is not under pressure in Cyprus.

Will Cyprus prove lucky again for Ukraine's Anna?

Anna Muzychuk qualified just a week before the start of the Candidates, after the withdrawal of India No. 1 Humpy Koneru. The 36-year-old highest-ranked Ukrainian GM now leads the women's Candidates, undefeated and half a point ahead of the field.

Luckiest of the lot Vaishali R follows Anna at four points while Divya Deshmukh and Russian Kateryna Lagno and Aleksandra Goryachkina, along with Chinese Zhu Jiner, are in joint third position.

PREETI DOWNS OLY MEDALLIST AEJI, MAKES ASIAN BOXING FINAL

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: It was a day of mixed fortunes for Indian boxers at the Asian Championships in Ulaanbaatar. While some of the country's big names faltered, a young trio rose to the occasion to keep gold medal hopes alive. Veterans Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain bowed out in the semifinals while Preeti Pawar, Priya and Arundhati Choudhary ensured India's presence in multiple finals.

Leading the charge was Preeti, in the women's 54kg category. The World Boxing Cup (WBC) Finals gold medallist outclassed Korea's Aeji Im — a Paris Olympics bronze medallist — with a dominant 5-0 win. She now faces Chinese Taipei's Huang Hsiao-wen, a three-time world champion and Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist, in the final.

In the women's 60kg division, Priya defeated Mongolia's Namuun Monkhor by a unanimous 5-0 decision. She will meet North Korea's Un Gyong Won. Arundhati secured a composed 4-1 victory over Uzbekistan's Oysha Toirova in the 70kg semifinal. Kazakhstan's Bakyt Seidish awaits. In the 51kg semis, Nikhat suffered a 0-5 defeat to China's Wu Yu, the reigning Olympic champion. Lovlina, competing in the 75kg class, also exited after a 0-5 loss to Uzbekistan's Aziza Zokirova.

Lalit to fight for gold medal

New Delhi: The U-23 Asian Championships bronze medallist Lalit dominated China's Huoying Shi to enter the men's 55kg Greco Roman gold-medal match at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Monday. The 23-year-old Lalit outclassed Huoying Shi 11-3 in the semifinals.

But Aman (77kg, Greco Roman) and Sunil Kumar (87kg, Greco Roman) went down in their respective semifinals on a mixed opening day for the In-

ASIAN WRESTLING

dian contingent. They will contest for bronze on Tuesday. Lalit will take on Ikhtiyor Botirov of Uzbekistan after he defeated Ulan Uulu in the second semifinal 5-3.

In the 77kg Greco Roman semifinal, Aman went down against Ali Oskou of Iran 13-3. The Indian, who had reversed a 1-4 deficit to win 6-4 against China's Halishan Bahejiang in quarterfinals, will now face Yeonghun Noh of South Korea in bronze-medal match. PTI

Wawrinka makes early exit

Stan Wawrinka bid farewell to the Monte Carlo Masters as the 2014 champion fell 7-5, 7-5 to Sebastian Baez in the first round on Monday.

The 41-year-old three-time Grand Slam winner will retire from tennis at the end of the season and entered the main draw in Monaco as a wild card 20 years on from his debut at the tournament.

As reward for his victory, Baez will next face

TENNIS

world number one and reigning Monte Carlo champion Carlos Alcaraz in the second round.

Elsewhere, three-time former winner Stefanos Tsitsipas lost 5-7, 4-6 to 16th seed to Francisco Cerundolo. Andrey Rublev, the 2023 champion, navigated his way through a topsy-turvy opener as the 13th seed beat Nuno Borges 6-4, 1-6, 6-1 to set up a round of 32 meeting with Zizou Bergs.

AFP

CHAMPION: Jessica Pegula

PAUL CLAIMS TITLE

American fourth seed Tommy Paul scored a battling three-set victory over Argentine Roman Burruchaga to win the ATP Houston US Men's Clay Court Championship on Sunday. Paul, 28, held his nerve in a nail-biting third set to dig out a 6-1, 3-6, 7-5 triumph in 2hr 40min to claim the fifth ATP title of his career.

PEGULA RETAINS CROWN

Defending champion Jessica Pegula clinched back-to-back victories at the WTA Charleston Open clay court tournament, routing Ukraine's Yuliia Starodubtseva in straight sets to claim her second title of the year. Top seed Pegula sprinted to a 6-2, 6-2 victory against her 89th-ranked opponent. The Charleston victory follows Pegula's win at Dubai in Feb.

JODAR TRIUMPHS

Rafael Jodar joined the list of title-winning Spanish teenagers with his victory at the Grand Prix Hassan II in Morocco on Sunday and the 19-year-old said having the right mentality was the key to success in his first ATP tournament on clay. Jodar's 6-3 6-2 win over Marco Trungelliti put him into an elite group of Spaniards who captured ATP titles as teenagers in the professional era, including Rafa Nadal, Carlos Alcaraz, Carlos Moya, Juan Carlos Ferrero and Tommy Robredo. AGENCIES

One Of My Best Achievements, Says Ace Cueist On Sweeping The Nationals On Debut

Chitrangada.C
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Even after conquering billiards and snooker with 28 world titles, Pankaj Advani continues to find new ways to surprise — perhaps even himself.

At 40, and in his first-ever National pool championship in Ludhiana last week, the Bengaluru cueist scripted a debut for the ages, clinching both the 9-ball and 10-ball titles despite having virtually no competitive background in the format.

That this breakthrough has come so late in his career only adds to its intrigue. At a stage when most champions settle

CUE SPORTS

into legacy mode, Advani is still pushing boundaries — embracing unfamiliar challenges and emerging victorious.

His maiden national pool triumph is not just another addition to an already overflowing trophy cabinet, but a testament to his rare ability to evolve and win across disciplines. A self-confessed novice in the format, having played just two matches before the nationals, Advani rates the feat among his finest.

"At the national level, this is right up there — one of my best achievements in cue sports. I've never played competitive pool," he told TOI on Monday.

Explaining his late foray into the format, Advani noted, "Earlier, I felt it would hamper my progress in billiards and snooker, since it's a very different version of cue sport."

The transition is anything but simple. Unlike billiards and snooker, which share similar tables and equipment, pool presents a completely different challenge, from ball size to pocket dimensions and shot angles.

"To do it in my first attempt, and then win a double, I could never imagine in my wildest dreams that this would happen," he said. If anything, the circumstances made the triumph even more remarkable. Advani had done no specific preparation and only got a feel of the table after arriving in Punjab.

He was also coming off a rare early exit in a national snooker event — a setback that sharpened his resolve.

"When a sportsperson gets beaten, you always want to come back stronger," he said, adding that the disappointment gave him "a little more intent and determination" heading into the pool competition .

What worked in his favour, however, was the absence of pressure — something unfamiliar in a career defined by expectation.

ADVANI'S golden pool plunge

EYE ON THE BALL: Pankaj Advani in action during the Nationals in Ludhiana

> **To do it in my first attempt, and then win a double, I could never imagine in my wildest dreams that this would happen**
> —Pankaj Advani

"You have no idea how relieved it feels to enter a championship as an underdog," he reflected. Surrounded by seasoned pool specialists, Advani was, for once, not the man to beat. "There was no pressure of having to win or defend a title."

With a packed schedule ahead, it remains to be seen whether this success will lead to a deeper pursuit of pool.

"I don't think I'll be able to play every pool event, but I would love to play a couple of the big ones," he said.

This unexpected detour has added a fresh dimension to an already unparalleled career. "Definitely a new dimension," Advani said, acknowledging that success in pool brings him closer to the rare tag of a true all-rounder in cue sports, much like seasoned pro Alok Kumar.

Udit stars for Hebbal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Hebbal claimed a dominant 10-2 win over Jayanagar in the Chief Minister's Cupfootball tournament at the Bengaluru Football Stadium here on Monday. It was Udit G, who stole the show, as he netted four goals in their final league stage match.

Nikhil broke the deadlock in the sixth minute to put Jayanagar ahead, but their joy did not last for long. Hebbal just took five minutes to gain the lead with strikes from Vishal Villa and MD Abrahim, making it 2-1. Thereafter, it was complete domination from Hebbal attackers, which made the clash one-sided as Udit scored all his goals in the second half. In the quarterfinals, Hebbal will take on Krishnarajapura.

In another match, Byatarayanapura ended their campaign on a high as they beat Yeshwantpura 8-0, as Mrunal bagged a hat-trick. Yeshwantpura's disappointing campaign ended with three defeats in three matches. **Results:** Hebbal 10 (Vishal Villa 10, 43, MD Abrahim 11, Udit G 68, 85, 89, 90+2, Vaishaka 70, MD Ameenuddin 81, 83) bt Jayanagar 2 (Nikhil KT 6, 74); Byatarayanapura 8 (Mrunal 15, 44, 66, Yeswanth 29, Mariadinesh 36, Manjunath 60, Sandeep 85, Satish 90) bt Yeshwanthapura 0. **Quarterfinals lineup: April 9:** CV Raman Nagar vs RR Nagar; Hebbal vs KR Pura; **April 10:** Shanthi Nagar vs Shivaji Nagar; Sarvagna Nagar vs Rajaji Nagar.

—Kaushal Kumar

Oly medallist Blanka named int'l ambassador

Bengaluru: Double Olympic medallist and two-time high jump world champion Blanka Vlasic was on Monday named the international event ambassador for the TCS World 10K, to be held here on April 26. The Croatian star won silver at the 2008 Beijing Games and followed it up with a bronze at the 2016 Rio Games, alongside multiple world championship and world indoor titles. Her personal best of 2.08m, achieved in 2009, remains the Croatian national record and ranks as the third-highest clearance in women's high jump.

WORLD 10K

"I am honoured to be part of the 18th edition of the TCS World 10K Bengaluru. Being associated with an event that brings thousands of people together through running is truly inspiring and energising. Running is a sport that keeps us physically active and mentally strong, and it continues to play a vital role in shaping the athletics community," Blanka said in a release issued by Procam International.

"My message to every participant is simple – give it your best, prepare well, and embrace the journey. I look forward to seeing everyone in Bengaluru as we come together to celebrate the spirit of Bengaluru."

Off the field, too, the former champion has left her mark. From her role with the 'Champions for Peace' initiative to serving as vice president of the Croatian Olympic Committee, she has remained actively involved with sports.

"We are delighted to welcome Blanka as the international event ambassador for this year's TCS World 10K Bengaluru. Her extraordinary achievements, coupled with her continued contribution to the global sporting community, make her an inspiring figure," Vivek Singh, joint MD, Procam International, stated. TNN

Satwik-Chirag pull out of Asian event

Manne.Ratnakar@timesofindia.com

Former champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty pulled out of the Badminton Asia Championships (BAC) on Monday as Satwik is yet to recover from his shoulder injury. In their absence, Lakshya Sen and PV Sindhu will lead the Indian challenge at this continental individual championships, which begins in Ningbo, China on Tuesday.

According to their coach Kim Tan Her, Satwik still has pain in the shoulder. Sen, who had an impressive outing at the All England, will be keen to end India's 61-year wait for a singles title. Dinesh Khanna is the only Indian to win a singles gold at the Asian Championships.

Lakshya begins against Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong and is expected to face

BADMINTON

the second seed Shi Yu Qi of China in the pre-quarterfinals. Lakshya stunned Yu Qi in the All England first round last month. The Almora shuttler will be focusing on improving his consistency.

HS Prannoy, Kidambi Srikanth and Ayush Shetty are the other Indians in the men's singles main draw. While Prannoy plays a qualifier, Ayush will face Chinese fifth seed Li Shi Feng and Srikanth is drawn against former world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore.

Sindhu returns to the circuit after missing the European circuit due to the situation in West Asia. The world No.13 looked sharp at the Indonesia Masters, where she reached the quarters this January. She will start against Wong Ling Ching of Malaysia and is likely to run into second seed Wang Zhi Yi of China next.

Unnati Hooda, Tanvi Sharma and Malvia Bansod are the other Indians in the women's singles main draw.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Delhi Capitals pacer Kyle Jamieson joins a growing chorus of players who have been critical of IPL's Impact Player rule, says it takes a lot of skill out of the game

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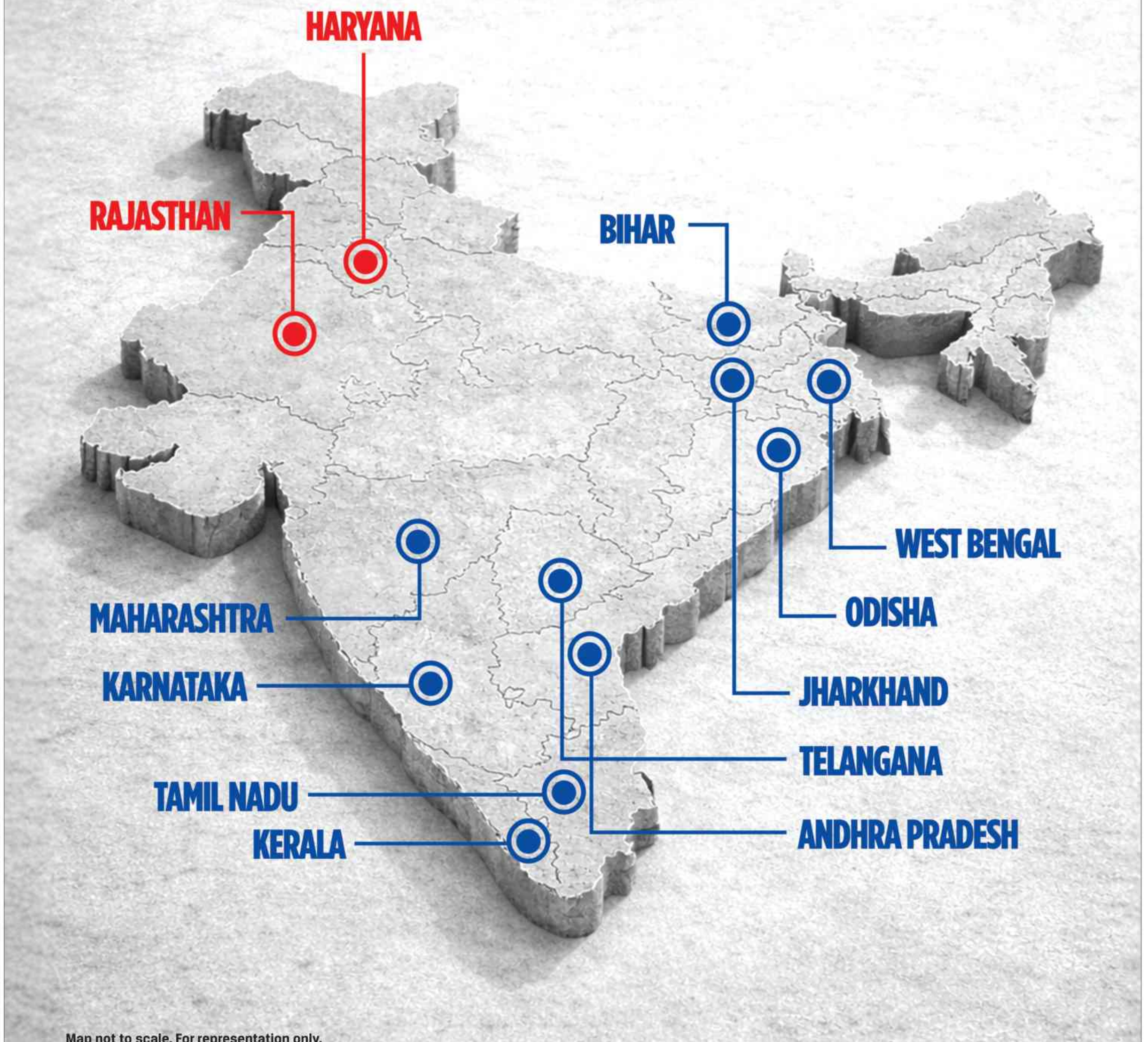

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